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A COUNSELOR'S VIEW OF THE EDUCATION  
OF AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH

by

PAUL MICHAEL WISHALL

B. A., Kansas State University, 1968

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A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

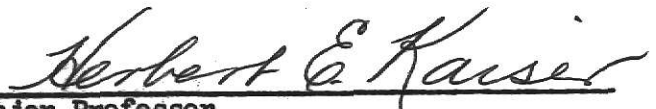
MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1972

Approved by:

  
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## Chapter 1

### THE MISTREATED AMERICAN INDIAN

Since the first white men set foot on the "new world" soil which later was to become the United States, the American Indian has been the unfortunate recipient of an ever-vascillating policy of misdirected kindnesses, cruel devastation, and overt extermination. President Richard M. Nixon in a policy statement recorded in the Indian Record noted that "from the time of their first contact with European settlers, the American Indians have been oppressed and brutalized, deprived of their ancestral lands and denied the opportunity to control their own destiny."<sup>1</sup> Man's inhumanity to man is exemplified in the tragic history of the white man's treatment of the red man.

Educational practices conducted by the white man for the American Indian have historically been quite as effective in the subjugation of the red man as were the renowned U. S. Calvary "victories" over Indian encampments of women and children in bringing the American Indian to his knees and savagely destroying every vestige of the fierce pride that once was his. The late Senator Robert Kennedy in looking at the cold statistics concerning Indian education called it a "national tragedy and a national disgrace." Such strong, descriptive terms are merely an indication of the state of affairs of Indian education. Kennedy stated that "the 'First American' had become the last American with the opportunity for employment, education, a

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<sup>1</sup>President Richard M. Nixon, "A New Era for the American Indian," Indian Record, (July 8, 1970), p. 2.

decent income, and the chance for a fulfilling and rewarding life."<sup>2</sup> He went on to say that "clearly, effective education lies at the heart of any lasting solution . . . and it must be an education that no longer presumes that cultural differences mean cultural inferiority."<sup>3</sup> This points out a common theme in American Indian education in which the Indian is permitted little participation and control over the structure of his own educational program. The white man has paid little attention to the notion that Indians should have a strong voice in deciding their own destiny. The cultural differences of the Indians have been scorned as paganistic and primitive and unacceptable. Thus there has been the movement of the dominant culture to make white men out of the red men through "manipulatory educational practices."

The story of the American Indian is also a record of the enormous and bountiful contributions to this country which the Indian has made. These include such intimate values as expression in art and influences upon culture, strength and spirit of character, and a common sense of history and purpose. In pointing out the contributions of the first citizens, Dr. Franz Winkler stated that "one would expect that all intelligent and active Indians would long to participate in the philosophy and the ways of white civilization" and "that this is not the case can be explained only by the red man's instinctive knowledge that materialistic achievements alone will never bring

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<sup>2</sup>Senator Robert Kennedy, Indian Education: A National Tragedy — A National Challenge, U. S. Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Labor and Public Welfare, 1969), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

happiness to the heart of an Indian."<sup>4</sup> Materialistic Achievements have not brought happiness to the white man as one can see that men with a superabundance of material goods are often the most unhappy of God's creatures. The contributions which the Indian has made to modern American society have come at no small cost. They were paid for by the expense account of the Indian's blood, his heritage, and his sacred honor.

#### STATEMENT OF DILEMMA

In numerous regards the white culture and the Indian culture have been at opposite ends of the value continuum. Due to the insensitivity and control of the white majority, Indian cultural values have been rejected and ridiculed. The white man has used education of Indian youth as his primary vehicle of prejudice and manipulation. Under the authority of the dominant culture, the educational system designed for Indians has not considered the real needs and values of Indians. There has been a deliberate attempt to "solve the Indian dilemma" by making the Indians think and act like whites. The unfortunate results of the white man's attempts to educate the Indian with white values have been an abject failure. This is the reason why the dilemma still exists today. Indications are pointing to the need for Indian parents and tribal leaders to have control over the education of their children. Indian school personnel have the dedication and personal motivation to help their children develop their pride and innate abilities. Indian leaders should at least have the opportunity to make their own mistakes in regard to the education of their children.

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<sup>4</sup>Dr. Franz Winkler, Can the Red Man Help the White Man?, ed. Sylvester M. Morey (Gilbert Church, Publisher: New York, 1970), p. 20.

### Cultural Differences

The American Indian in the United States today is a foreigner. Ironically, the first citizen is considered an alien as a result of his stubborn resistance of the white cultural values. Some of the older Indians have been coerced into acting the role of a white man either because of the fight for survival to keep a job and to feed himself and his loved ones or because of his utter dissatisfaction with the poverty and despair in evidence on the Indians' "reserved," barren wastelands. The Indian who finds himself working and living as a white man is considered an "apple" (red on the outside and white on the inside) by those Indians wishing to salvage some remnants of a proud past. Vine Deloria, Jr., in his current best-seller, Custer Died For Your Sins, feels that the oppressed Indians are a dynamic people with a social structure of their own, asking only to be freed of cultural oppression. Deloria feels that the life of the Indian has traditionally been one of simplicity and mystery in which the Indian is "one with nature" and that the Western Hemisphere produced "wisdom." Western Europeans in taking lands from the Indians brought with them an outlook of a people who were scientific and abstract in thought and were singularly interested in cold facts and knowledge. In referring to Indians, Deloria, a Sioux, mentions that the Indians in stubbornly holding on to what they feel is important to them take lightly or discard what they feel is irrelevant to their needs and that "this is what makes them Indian."<sup>5</sup> In numerous cases education has been totally irrelevant to the needs of the Indian and has

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<sup>5</sup>Vine Deloria, Jr., Custer Died For Your Sins (New York: Avon Books, 1969), p. 23.

therefore been regarded as unnecessary and a waste of time. Another outspoken Indian, John Belindo, a Navajo-Kiowa, in looking at the cultural differences of the white man and the red man says that:

I see the cultural differences as a matter of emphasis. The dominant culture sees a plant, a universe, a man, and asks: 'Why?' . . . 'Why does a plant need sunlight to grow?' 'Why do a ship's sails recede at an equal pace over the horizon?' 'Why does a man prefer death to slavery?' An Indian, seeing seeing the same things, says, 'How beautiful is the sun on the flower!' 'How bravely this man met his death!'<sup>6</sup>

Considering these statements of the Indian's view of cultural differences one can see some fundamental differences. The Indian has a great amount of esteem and appreciation for the beauties of nature from which the Indian traditionally had to live. The white seemingly views the use of the land for creating material, synthetic, consumable goods. From these basic differences, numerous others arise which result in misunderstanding and lack of adequate communication between the red and white men.

#### The White Man's Educational System

Without understanding, acceptance, and open communication between the red and white man, there has occurred a tragic trail of human relations in which the demands and expectations of the dominant white culture have been imposed, and decreed upon the red man, like a strangling noose, in order to make the red man into a white man. If this couldn't be done physically, at least the attempt was made to change the minds and hearts of the red men so that they would think and believe along acceptable lines. The education of the American Indian is the classic example of the white man's attempt to

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<sup>6</sup> John Belindo, "How an Indian Sees It," Arizona Teacher, 58:18, October-November, 1969.

change the red man into his image. This educational endeavor has been as Senator Kennedy said "a national disgrace." The Indians in stubbornly sticking with their own cherished values paid "lip service" to the white man's ideas and beliefs. Law after law had been passed requiring the Indians to conform to white institutions. Indian children, in some cases, were actually kidnapped by government officials and forced into boarding schools thousands of miles from their homes in order to learn the white man's ways. Much of the Indian youth's lack of success in school is directly attributable to the cultural discrepancies and the natural desire of the Indian people to preserve their own heritage and pride in their culture. Statements about the quality of Indian education are always backed up by irrefutable statistics saying, in effect, that the average Indian child is behind the average white and this difference becomes increasingly greater as each progresses through school until at the time of high school graduation, the Indian child is somewhere around two years behind the average white child. Some of the inconsistencies can readily be seen in graphic form.



Table 1  
Comparison of Levels of Educational Achievement  
of Indian and Non-Indian Citizens

	U. S. Non-Indian Average	Indian Average	Deficits to be Corrected
Years Schooling	10.6 <sup>1</sup>	8 <sup>2</sup>	2.6 years behind
Overage Students (in all grades, stated as % of total enrollment.)	Under 20%	42% <sup>3</sup> (7% are 3 or more years behind)	20% overage
Academic achievement stated in years behind on standard- ized achievement tests: grades 2-5.	0	1 year <sup>4</sup>	2 years retarda- tion to overcome by end of high school.
Grades:			
6-8	0	2 years	
9-12	0	2 years	
Kindergarten enrollment as % of eligible children	73% of all <sup>5</sup> 5 year olds, 1965	Under 10% (820 children in Kinder- garten in FY 1969)	13,000 more Indian children in Kinder- garten.

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Abstract, 1967, based on 1960 Census Data

<sup>2</sup> Census Reports, 1960

<sup>3</sup> Based on Bureau of Indian Affairs annual school attendance reports, 1967

<sup>4</sup> All academic achievement data is based on different tests given to about 150 B.I.A. schools enrolling almost 22,000 students, 3,400 of whom were in the eleven high schools included in the sample.

<sup>5</sup> Statistical Abstract, 1967

<sup>6</sup> B.I.A. Enumeration and Estimated Kindergarten-aged children

Source for Table 1:

Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, 1969  
Report of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate,  
91st Congress, 1st Session, made by its Special Subcommittee on Indian  
Education, p. 63.

In attempting to compare relative attainment levels of the white youth and the Indian youth, Table 1 points out an evident lag in Indian education. These statistics clearly show that based upon comparable data the Indian youth are substantially behind the white student. This is due to the unfortunate chaos and misdirection found in many of the schools set up for Indians and in the public schools with inadequately trained personnel and insufficient facilities to properly work with the Indian.

#### Indian Self-Direction

In a memorandum written by the late Senator Kennedy to the chairman of the Committee on Rules and Administration, Senator B. Everett Jordan, a notice was given concerning the status of Indian education. Senator Kennedy wrote that:

To a substantial extent, the quality and effectiveness of Indian education is a test of this Government's understanding and commitment. The few statistics we have are the most eloquent evidence of our own failure: Approximately sixteen thousand children are not in school at all: dropout rates are twice the national average; the level of formal education is half the national average; Indian children, more than any other group, believe themselves to be 'below average' in intelligence; Indian children in the twelfth grade have the poorest self-concept of all minority groups tested.<sup>7</sup>

These findings speak for themselves. They are a mere indication of a whole gallery of deficiencies resulting from the white man's attempt to prescribe the type of education which is best for the Indian. Periodically, the

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<sup>7</sup>Kennedy, op. cit., p. 3.

Federal Government sends out a Task Force which writes up a report stating that Congress is not appropriating enough money to do an adequate job of helping Indians. The Task Report finds that some Indians are making some progress but that the fluctuating policy of Congress is stifling the progress which could be made. The reports usually advise that a consistent policy of self-help with adequate loan funds for reservation development be initiated. Indian programs in education under Indian control and direction are a relatively new development and are still considered as experiments in Indian education.

Frank Battese, vice-chairman of the Prairie Band of Pottawatomí Indians in northwest Kansas, is just one of an increasing number of Indian activists who would like to see the Government establish a "hands-off" policy for Indians on their reservations. These Indians have seen too many misguided attempts of the Government acting through white educators who don't understand the Indian or his needs. They would much prefer to try some programs of their own developed by their tribal leaders. A very unique example of this increasing Indian mood to control their own affairs can be seen in the proposed project at St. Mary's, Kansas. The Pottawatomí Indians are presently engaged in negotiations for return to the Indians of the land and the buildings of the now-defunct St. Mary's College, which was formerly a Jesuit seminary. Originally, the land was taken from these Indians through a treaty with the government, the railroad and the Catholic Church. If all goes as planned, the Indians will use it to build an educational system for Indians. This optimistic plan would result in an educational plant for Indians from the ages of three to twenty-two. The basic objective of the system would be to teach the Indian how to be an Indian in a modern society

and also to work for the "Indian cause." It would include a pre-school day care center for Indian children, an elementary school, a program for senior students to work as instructors for younger students, and an associated program of processing plants such as grain elevators and slaughter houses where students can learn practical skills and provide income for the entire enterprise. This is one example of how the Indian may help himself work through the complex matrix of a suitable education for all Indian youth. In this way he could avoid the bumbling encroachments of undesirable advice given by a white person who believes he knows the best prescription for educating Indian youth. President Nixon, in view of this need for Indian direction in Indian education, stated that "the time has come to break decisively with the past (mistreatment and non-understanding of the Indian) and to create the conditions for a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions."<sup>8</sup> This initiative on the part of national leaders is crucial to the development of Indian independence and responsibility in determining their own needs and uses for organizing better schools.

#### Change Needed

An estimated fifty percent of American Indians are under the age of seventeen. The implications of this youthful population are great to the already overburdened educational systems for Indians. Because of this fifty percent of Indians under the age of seventeen, there will have to be a tremendous increase in the construction of Indian school buildings. Even

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<sup>8</sup>Nixon, op. cit., p. 2.

today, the Federal school systems are suffering from lack of funds and mismanagement. Many students are forced to study and live under greatly substandard conditions. Dilapidated buildings stand condemned and vacant, yet replacements have not been built and some classes are held in reinforced sections of such condemned buildings. Public schools in rural communities attended by Indian children are often overcrowded and lack library, recreational, and other necessary facilities. It is not too surprising, in view of this morass of inefficiency and infinitesimal funding, that over four thousand school-age Navajo children are not attending school at all and that about ten percent of all American Indians over the age of fourteen have had no schooling at all. These are often considered functional illiterates, retarded, and uneducable. The end result of this educational wasteland is the unemployment, alcoholism, malnutrition, infant mortality, suicide, and massive welfare problems.

One finding of the Special Subcommittee on Indian Education in the 1969 report showed the low quality of almost every aspect of schooling available to Indian children. This included such things as worn-out school buildings, outdated course materials and books, attitudes of teachers and administrators, and the accessibility of school buildings. These types of conditions have led Boulay to make the observation that "the one institution which has the potential of solving 'the Indian problem,' the school, is mired in bureaucracy, fragmented philosophies, a scarcity of funds and a history of general inadequacy."<sup>9</sup> The potential for helping solve the numerous social and economic ills of the American Indian lies at the heart

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<sup>9</sup>Peter C. Boulay, "Indians Forever (Forgotten)," Arizona Teacher, Vol. 58, (October-November, 1969), p. 14.

of the educational process. The educational system, as presently organized, will do nothing but insure the continued poverty, apathy, and despondency of Indian youth and of the Indian community.

The education of the American Indian is moving gradually away from the bureaucratic hands of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the responsibility of the states. Today, in fact, the states of California, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin have total responsibility for the Indians within their boundaries living on established reservations. It has been said that from birth to death, the Indian's home, land, schools, jobs, stores where he shops, the tribal council that governs him, the opportunities that govern him, the way in which he spends his money, and the way he disperses of his trust property are all determined by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Among Indians themselves, there is a good deal of ambivalent feeling about the desirability of having to be controlled by a bureaucratic machine which operates under the Department of the Interior. Those in favor of continued Bureau control fear what might happen to them if they were left totally on their own. Those who would like to do away with the Bureau are the more active Indians who wish to have total control over their own lives. The Bureau has some extremely dedicated people working for it and as a result has helped the Indians in numerous ways. Due to the bureaucratic "red tape" and many historical mistakes which have worked out to the detriment of the Indian there is considerable dissatisfaction with the Bureau and a certain amount of distrust of the Bureau's word.

An indication of the degree of influence which the Bureau presently plays in the education of Indian youth can be seen by looking at the following table.

Table 2

Statistical Fact Sheet on Schools Operated by the  
Bureau of Indian Affairs, F. Y. 1971

1. Census of Indian School Children, ages 5 to 18		206,683
2. Enrollment and Average Daily Attendance in Federal Facilities, all ages		
	<u>ENROLLMENT</u>	<u>A.D.A.</u>
a. Boarding Schools	35,938	28,716.0
b. Day Schools	16,520	14,283.5
c. Hospital Schools	133	18.5
d. Dormitories	<u>4,195</u>	<u>3,179.1</u>
TOTAL	56,786	46,197.1
3. Graduates and Grade Completions		
a. High School Graduates	2,090	
b. 8th Grade Completion	2,671	
c. Post-Graduate Completions	285	
4. Degree of Indian Blood		
a. Full Blood	41,240	
b. 3/4 Blood	3,986	
c. 1/2 Blood	4,854	
d. 1/4 Blood	2,021	
e. Less than 1/4 Blood	<u>490</u>	
TOTAL	52,291	
5. Number of Schools and Dormitories		
a. Boarding	77	
b. Day	121	
c. Hospital	2	
d. Dormitories	<u>19</u>	
TOTAL	219	

Source:

Statistics Concerning Indian Education, Fiscal Year 1971, U. S.  
Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (Haskell Indian Junior  
College, 1971), p. 37.

Figures of most importance on Table 2 are the number of students actually enrolled in Bureau schools, the types of schools in the system, and the number of high school, eighth grade, and post graduate completions in 1971. Although the Bureau is committed to a program of gradual reduction of influence in the lives of the Indian, it is clear from these figures that the Bureau still has an important role in the education and life of many Indian youths.

The general distribution of Indian students in different types of schools in fiscal year 1971, ages 5 to 18 years, inclusive, shows that 68.8 percent attended public schools, 25.7 percent attended Federal schools, and 5.5 percent attended mission and other schools.<sup>10</sup> The comparable figures for 1967 were 60 percent in public schools, 33.6 percent in Federal schools, and 6.4 percent in mission and other schools.<sup>11</sup> In 1968, the percent of Indian students in public schools increased slightly to 61.3 percent, those in Federal schools slipped to 32.7 percent, and those in mission and other schools dropped to 6.0 percent.<sup>12</sup> Clearly, one can see that in these four years the percent of Indians in public schools increased by almost 9 percent, the percent in Federal schools fell by 8 percent, and the percent in mission and other private schools fell by about 1 percent. This changing pattern in the types of schools attended by Indian youth appears to point out a continuing trend in the direction of Indian education. While the Bureau of

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<sup>10</sup>U. S. Department of Interior, Statistics Concerning Indian Education: Fiscal Year 1971, (Haskell Indian Junior College, 1971), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>U. S. Department of the Interior, Statistics Concerning Indian Education: Fiscal Year 1967, (Haskell Indian Junior College, 1967), p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>U. S. Department of the Interior, Statistics Concerning Indian Education: Fiscal Year 1968, (Haskell Indian Junior College, 1968), p. 2.



Indian Affairs still has an impact on a great number of Indian students, the influence it once had is diminishing as more Indian students enter the public schools.

### Inclinations

The dilemma of the American Indian is that he faces a sense of futility and despair as a direct result of the treatment of the white man. The pride and cultural values for which the Indian was once noted, in spite of the centuries of cultural suppression, are now showing definite signs of life. This is apparent in the movements and evidences of revived interests of such Indian groups as the National Indian Youth Council, the National Congress of American Indians, the American Indian Movement, the American Indian Development, and the American Indian Historical Society of San Francisco. These sundry groups differ greatly in degree of militancy and specific goals but they work in their various ways to do many things. The most important of these would include the desire to reestablish a strong tribal membership to be better prepared to work with legislation, a return of the Indian to his former pride and practice of his traditional customs and ceremonies, publication and collection of contemporary material of Indians, and general redevelopment of the Indian's lands, his social and economic position, and his educational plants. The Indian might well be thinking in his mind, "Much talk and no concrete programs is just another devious attempt of the white man to placate the inner furor of our hearts." The dilemma as presented is complex and deceptively simple. It could be greatly relieved if the white man were to provide technical advice when requested, assist with adequate funding the ideas and propositions of the Indian, work towards a sincere trust, acceptance, and dignity in dealings with the Indian, and allow the Indian the opportunity to take full control of his own life.

## AN IDENTITY

The identity of the American Indian like the identity of any man is formed to a great extent by other people's reactions to himself and his overt behaviors. The Indian has come to think of himself in terms of how he is treated by the white people who control his life. In the special case of the Indian, a white man may see him as being quiet, shy, distrustful, stoic, and reluctant to speak. What the white man fails to perceive is that underneath this submissive and impenetrable facade is a warm and sensitive human being. This Indian is a person who has been brutally removed from his lands, who is scorned and looked down on by the white society for these same centuries of white "savagery," who has been given less than a second-class citizenship, and who has been pushed hard to conform to the white man's standards. Still, one cannot generalize about Indians and force them into neat little "cubbyholes" called stereotypes. Indian societies are today and have been through history quite different. Not only does each tribe, or reservation, or community differ from the others but there are also differences within each particular Indian group. Some Indians have become assimilated into the dominant white culture quite readily while others have extremely strong feelings about maintaining their native Indian way of life.

### Indian Values

There are some basic cultural values held by nearly all Indians due to their closeness to nature and which are in some cases almost the exact opposite of the values held by most white people who came into this country. Indian life is oriented to the present. The essence of living could be found in the present timelessness. Things were to be enjoyed as they came. The white man anticipates the hope of a better life tomorrow. He is "future oriented" and time-conscious with advance schedules set for work, for

recreation, for church, and other daily activities. The Indian traditionally feels a sense of "harmony with nature" and the animals and plants are considered as his brothers and sisters. The white man considers this idea to be quite absurd and attempts to "conquer nature" in using the plants, animals, and land to gain some materialistic end. Historically, the Indian lived by hunting and food gathering and considered saving as unimportant. Even today, many Indians prefer to use what they have in the present. The white man has learned from his heritage to keep part of the wealth he gets from physical and mental efforts in order to develop more things. Finally, routinized work is usually not found in the cultural values of the Indian, who traditionally would only work in order to get a meal or provide for some immediate need. The white man with his Protestant Ethic feels that work is good in and of itself. Man must work from eight o'clock until five o'clock each day to support himself and his dependents. The white man tends to see a great amount of illogic in the cultural values of the Indians and finds that he cannot really understand why the Indian thinks as he does. The Indian on the other hand, doesn't appreciate the majority of the white man's values and sees them as being quite adverse to the beauty of nature and life.

The path toward a true living together of the red and white civilizations for mutual benefits must start with recognition of their differences rather than with any attempt to reshape Indians in the image of White Americans. While it is the task of our government to provide Indian leaders with every possible opportunity to rebuild their own culture, it is up to the Indians themselves to bring what is so great in their heritage into a form appropriate to 20th century conditions. Since the wheel of history cannot be turned back, a restoration of Indian culture will have to be thoroughly modern, without, however accepting the blatant errors and the pseudoscientific materialism of modern America and Europe.<sup>13</sup>

This astute observation of Dr. Franz Winkler is not understood by most white people who are working daily with Indian communities and with Indian children. While the Indians are victims of prejudice, much of their diffi-

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<sup>13</sup>Winkler, op. cit., p. 107.

culty in adapting to the white man's world, either in an urban or a reservation setting, stems from the inadequacy of their cultural background for the modern environment, both urban and rural. Unable to remain on the land with any degree of success, they are often equally unable to establish a new life elsewhere. A better understanding on both the part of white people and Indians is essential if the Indian is to be able to successfully live in the modern world while maintaining his pride in his cultural identity.

#### Impact of a White Education

Frequently, the Indian child comes from a home marked by poverty, disease, instability, or conflict. The physical and emotional well-being of this Indian youth does not raise him to levels of understanding, expectation, and aspiration which support the school's effort to promote intellectual growth. Often, however, the school does not promote anything for the Indian student except feelings of frustration, apathy, and loss of self-respect. Where the school reinforces the sense of personal insignificance and inadequacy that life may already have imposed on the disadvantaged Indian child, he is likely to benefit little from schooling and drop out at an early grade level. The education of Indian youth has too often been directly responsible for making a shambles of his self-image and his identity and his desire to get out of school as soon as possible. Belindo, in sizing up the impact of the education experience for Indian youth in his search for identity states that "a twelve year old Indian child is a scarred battlefield on which two cultures have waged a devastating war."<sup>14</sup> These children are experiencing "that relentless war of attrition on their minds that cause

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<sup>14</sup>Belindo, op. cit., p. 17.

thirty, forty, fifty, sixty percent dropout rates in high school."<sup>15</sup> The Indian child must understand the goals and demands of two different cultures. He must select the particular goals from each which will best help him to reach his goals. In understanding the important values of both cultures, the Indian child is better able to merge them into a personal system of values. The Indian child in being confronted with two cultures has much more adjusting to do than the white child who just has to adjust to one culture. The Indian youth is faced with a great deal of confusion when two quite different cultures begin to press in on him with conflicting demands before he has an adequate chance to fully comprehend the conflicts in each culture.

The Indian child is often a "lost personality between two cultures." He may be deeply torn between a home life which is heavily based upon his native culture and his school where the dominant culture takes precedence. Dr. Franz Winkler refers to this as a type of "limbo" between two worlds where one world is:

represented by tribal life and the beauty of ancient ways and customs. But this world offers no share in the wealth of technological civilization and it has grown almost incomprehensible to a generation no longer brought up in the old way. The other world promises material goods and outer success with inner emptiness. Thus, in despair, Indian youths, (as well as their white brothers and sisters), only too often seek refuge in a shadow world of alcohol and drugs that are honorable in neither the one world nor the other.<sup>16</sup>

Indian youth then find it difficult to function in either society.

#### Adult Expectations and Role Models

The schools, teachers, and administrators all combine to make up the

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<sup>15</sup>Belindo, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>16</sup>Winkler, op. cit., p. 20.

educational system for the Indian students. These are often guilty for instigating or reinforcing the poor self-image of Indian students and for their anxiousness to withdraw from school. "Condemned for his language and his culture, berated because his values aren't those of his teacher, treated demeaningly simple because he is Indian, the Indian student begins asking himself if he really isn't inferior."<sup>17</sup> This becomes to Indian youth a "self-fulfilling prophecy" which continually reiterates the old adage that "Indians are no good." Dr. Brewton Berry stated:

The theory is that if teachers and other members of the dominant group are convinced that the Indian is innately inferior and incapable of learning, such a child will come to think of himself in the negative way and set for himself lower standards of effort, achievement, and ambition. Thus the teacher's expectation and prediction that her Indian pupils will do poorly in school, and in later life become major factors in guaranteeing the accuracy of her predictions.<sup>18</sup>

The emotional duress which torments Indian youth may not only be caused by his difficulty in adjusting to the dominant white culture. Much of it comes from getting the verbal and non-verbal feedback from educational personnel who believe that they actually are working with a human form with substantially less intelligence who has descended from ancestors and parents who continue to practice primitive and paganistic rituals. The Indian child must be helped during this period of transition, questioning, and anomie to see similar values which exist in both cultures and helped to study, compare, and apply them in new situations. There is a definite need to balance the ultimate and basic values common to both cultures and to stress less the need

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<sup>17</sup>Dr. Brewton Berry, The Education of American Indians, 91st Congress, 1st Session, Subcommittee on Indian Education (February, 1969) p. 28.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34.

for the adjustment of the Indian to the values of the dominant culture. Each culture has something of value to offer and the Indian should not be forced to adjust himself to beliefs and behaviors which are more acceptable to the white man. Another immediate need is to secure only those educational personnel who have a solid understanding and working relationship with the Indian. These individuals would be free from prejudice and "fantasy" notions concerning the culture of the Indians and would ideally be well-educated Indians themselves.

The rapid changes which occur in the Indian child's life call for a great amount of personal and social adjustment. Indian youth need the help of "significant others," particularly adults, in formulating images of the selves they wish to become. Adult models are needed as patterns for the child's behavior. Adult support is needed to achieve those images. When the Indian home fails to meet this need then the school must fill the gap. Still, the school is looked at as being "suspect" as it is often staffed by white people who have little actual knowledge about the youth with whom they are working. Sylvester Morley pointed out some of the apparent needs in the educational system operated by whites for Indian children. Morley stated that, "there is much for Indian children in white education and white schools but at the same time an interest in the basic Indian truths should be maintained. Indian parents want this for their children; they also want it for themselves."<sup>19</sup>

The Indian leaders don't want to necessarily eliminate white education entirely, but they would like to "turn things backwards as far as

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<sup>19</sup>Sylvester Morley, Can the Red Man Help the White Man? (New York: Gilbert Church, Publisher, 1970), p. 102.



Indian culture is concerned and make it flourish once more."<sup>20</sup> From the Indians' festivals, dances, and legends, their children learn both morality and joy in life. Indian parents are understandably concerned when their children must attend school hundreds of miles away from home in a white institution. This usually means that children and parents will be separated for a substantial length of time. This boarding school situation is certainly an area of acute concern for Indian parents. This concern involves a mixture of dissatisfaction, fear, and outright belligerence. In the boarding schools the only adult models for the Indian students are the teachers and administrators, most of whom are white. The Bureau of Indian Affairs set up boarding schools ostensibly for those Indian youth without access to a public school and for those students needing intensive English instruction to overcome a language handicap. Part of the reasoning, however, behind the principle of boarding schools was to get the Indian child away from the influence of the home environment where the parents might encourage him to use the native tongue and customs and possibly to not attend school at all. This is one of the reasons why the Bureau of Indian Affairs has often been directly accused of destroying the home stability and happiness of the Indian family. Belindo states that "too many of our children are in boarding schools, miles from their homes, in the hands of people selected from a civil service roster, who administer and teach under a policy dictated by the parents don't-know-who in Washington."<sup>21</sup>

The Indian community feel powerless in regard to the education of

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<sup>20</sup>Morley, loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Belindo, op. cit., p. 17.



their children in the public and Federal schools. White people usually dominate the local school boards in schools where most of the students are Indians. The Indians are unable to select the curricula, the administrators, or the teachers for the instruction of their children. The discrimination which keeps Indian parents from having their say in the education of their offspring often pervades the school and classroom as well as causing other hardships for the Indian student. A recent report by the Carnegie Foundation described the relationship between white people and Indians as "one of the most crucial problems in the education of Indian children." The report went on to state that "this relationship frequently demeans Indians, destroys their self-respect, and self-confidence, develops or encourages apathy and a sense of alienation from the educational process, and deprives them of an opportunity to develop the ability and experience to control their own affairs through participation in effective local government."<sup>22</sup> The inability of the Indian parents to have a strong voice in the education of their children means that the educational goals and systems are white-oriented. The Indian students are thus deprived of the significant adult models they need so badly if they are to develop a positive and healthy self-image. Indian leadership in education for Indian students will continue to be a vital necessity if Indian youth are to regain an interest in getting an education and to develop a viable pride in their Indian heritage.

Another reason for the unpopularity of the boarding schools among Indians which also involves the self-image of Indian youth is that they are very inflexible, restrictive, and military-like. One interesting conflict

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<sup>22</sup> Carnegie Foundation, Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, (U. S. Special Subcommittee on Labor and Public Welfare, 1969), p. 24.

between Indian identity and the restrictions of the boarding school has come about with the renewed desire of many Indian males to grow their hair shoulder length as their ancestors had done not too many years before. The Indian males with the long hair are establishing an identity, an association with their proud past. Some school administrators have opposed the long hair style and have expelled Indian students who failed to conform to the regulations. For those Indian males wanting to get out of school this was a sure-fire method. In recent years, however, the issue has come to public notice and the judgment of the courts. The court cases of Griffin vs. Tatum (1969) and Breen vs. Kahl (1969) clearly indicated the court's view that "wearing one's hair a certain length is one's liberty protected by the Fourteenth Amendment." Thus, such restrictions as having to keep hair neatly cropped would in the "eyes of the court" be an assault on the personality and individuality of a person, would undermine identity, and would invade human 'being' and violate a basic law which is the concept of 'ordered liberty.'<sup>23</sup> The Indian search for identity, whether it be in shoulder-length hair or representation in the educational process of Indian youth, is a genuine concern of Indians today who realize that through re-establishing their identity and pride in Indian heritage, they will regain a positive self-image which will in turn enable them to exert more power and influence over their own affairs.

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<sup>23</sup>Gene Leitka, "Search for Identity Creates Problems for Indian Students," Journal of American Indian Education, 11:9, (October, 1971).

## Chapter 2

### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIAN EDUCATION

To establish a better understanding of people often it is of much value to know pertinent facts and events in their past. In studying the major developments in Indian education one can get a far better perspective about the current status and degree of health of educational programs which have been designed for Indian youth. The whole history of educational practices for Indians in the United States is evidence that policies and programs have swayed with the "winds of time." Each change has contributed to the building of a synthetic Indian society based largely upon what others considered right and proper for the Indian people. The unhappy lot of the American Indian is that this has happened so often throughout their relationships with the white man and it will continue until the Indian gets a more powerful voice in his own affairs. Nowhere is the vacillation of policy more evident than in Federal schooling for the Indian youth. Federal schools have existed for about one hundred years. In the words of an early Secretary of the Interior, the objective of an education for the Indians was to "civilize" them by training them for farming, homemaking, and trades. These limited aspirations set for Indians a century ago still influence programs and educational funding today. Generally, the central purpose of Indian education from the time the first white man came to the present has been to educate Indians for participation in American life. As will be seen in this chapter, policies aimed at this purpose have vacillated greatly from such extremes as removing children from their homes many miles away to boarding schools for long periods of time to present policies of educating

Indian youth within the home environment, where feasible, to attempt to allow the child to maintain some home ties. Considering the effects of constant change and redefinition of emphasis upon Indian education, the Indian story is an unbelievable saga of an almost constant suppression and ridiculing over centuries of time of a cultural identity which has somehow managed to survive.

### MISSION PERIOD

Formal education for the Indians by the white colonists began in 1568 when Jesuit missionaries established a school for the instruction of the Florida Indians in Havana, Cuba. It has continued to the present with a conspicuous lack of success. Education was actually a secondary concern to the real ambition of the Jesuits to spread Christianity to the "heathen" Indians. The Jesuits, most of whom came from France, worked primarily around the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi and its tributaries. They stressed that Indian children learn the French language and customs and they also taught traditional subjects. In order to be more effective in teaching the children, the Jesuits, like the Federal boarding schools to come later, removed the child from his family and tribe. Another prominent group of missionaries, also representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, were the Franciscans from Spain. These missionaries entered the "new world" from the south and some accompanied Coronado into the Southwest by way of Central America. The Franciscans gathered the Indians into native villages around missions in order to keep the families intact. Here, the Indians were instructed in arts and crafts and some academic subjects of lesser importance and use to the Indian. The Franciscans also taught the Indians to clear the land and to farm. Protestants played a less important

role in the early attempts to Christianize and civilize the Indian but gradually they too attempted to win their fair share of converts. In his book, Custer Died For Your Sins, Deloria relates his own feelings about the early missionaries through the words of another Indian. Deloria writes that "an old Indian once told me that when the missionaries arrived they fell on their knees and prayed. Then they got up, fell on the Indians, and preyed."<sup>24</sup> In the same vein, Deloria states that "like the men from New England in Hawaii by Michener, missionaries on the North American continent came to preach and stayed to rule."<sup>25</sup> Many Indians today share these feelings about missionary workers who spend so much money on buildings and salaried workers to inform the Indians about the goodness of Christ while at the same time not doing much to improve the housing, education, and other needs of the Indian people. There is a tiredness in Deloria's voice when he speaks of the hypocrisy which has been practiced by white missionaries over the years.

#### TREATY PERIOD

One of the blackest marks in United States' history is the number of times that the Federal government failed to keep its word to the Indian through treaties. It became almost a certainty that if the government entered a treaty with the Indians that it would later be broken to assuage the greed and possessiveness of white settlers and exploiters. Regardless of whether it was a case of inability, unwillingness, or just plain ignorance of the treaty, the Federal government broke all treaties with a disgusting regularity. Between 1778 and 1871, the United States entered something like

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<sup>24</sup>Deloria, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

four hundred treaties and in each one it failed to live up to its obligations and promises. During this same period Indian tribes ceded almost a billion acres to the United States. In return, Indians were to retain inalienable and tax-exempt lands for themselves, and were given government pledges to provide such public services as education, medical care, and technical and agricultural training.

The earliest treaty which contained specific provisions for the education of the Indian was a promise by the government to provide a tribe with teachers "in the arts of the miller and sawer" and was signed in 1794. Similar provisions, usually in the exchange for Indians lands, were common elements in treaties for the next eighty years. Congress began appropriating funds for the training of Indians in 1802 when fifteen thousand dollars was made available annually "to provide civilization among the aborigines."<sup>26</sup> From 1819 to 1873, an act was in effect which provided an annual "civilization fund" to help convert Indians from hunters to agriculturalists. Again, there was an obvious attempt of the white man to "civilize" the Indian by making him study subjects and ideas which were strictly of a white nature. Many treaties between the United States and the Indian tribes provided for the establishment of schools for Indian children. Congress made an attempt to provide schools for Indian children where other educational institutions were not available. Often the Government made an honest attempt to fulfill the promises made to the Indian but with complete changes in the administrative positions came new policy. In 1842 the Federal government had established thirty-seven Indian schools. By 1881 there were one hundred and six of these

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<sup>26</sup> Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, op. cit., p. 11.

schools. Ninety years later, in 1968, the Bureau of Indian affairs was operating two hundred and twenty six Indian schools with an enrollment of 51,595 Indian children, and eighteen dormitories for 4,204 children who were attending public schools.<sup>27</sup> In 1971 the Bureau operated two hundred schools with an enrollment of 52,591 Indian students, and nineteen dormitories for 4,195 children attending public schools.<sup>28</sup> With the decreasing influence of the Bureau and increasing responsibility of the states for the education of the Indian these figures show that the Bureau actually gained about a thousand Indian children for an educational program which is supposed to be moving out of the jurisdiction of the Bureau. These figures do, however, give some indication of Government involvement in the education of Indian youth. When the white man did provide an education for the Indian, the white man's way of life always set the pattern. Traditionally, the main purpose of setting up the schools was for the assimilation of the Indian into the dominant culture. There has always been the feeling that the Indians would be better off if they would adopt the white man's habits, skills, knowledge, language, values, religion, attitudes, and customs. The treaty period has been marked by the Federal government's inability to provide an adequate response to it's treaties and promises and when it has made an attempt to fulfill some of the agreements, it is always in the line of something like an education of inferior quality with overtones of a prejudicial feeling, entirely unwarranted, of white superiority.

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<sup>27</sup> U. S. Department of the Interior, Statistics Concerning Indian Education: Fiscal Year 1968, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> U. S. Department of the Interior, Statistics Concerning Indian Education: Fiscal Year 1971, op. cit., p. 1.



## ALLOTMENT PERIOD

During this period, the Dawes Severalty Act, 1887, was passed. For Indians, this was just a symbol of the worst aspects of Indian policy. The Dawes Severalty Act, more commonly called the Allotment Act, was a means of dissolving the Indian land base legislatively. It provided for land allotments to individual Indians. In this way, the reservation, instead of belonging to the whole tribe, was divided up among individual Indians. This proved to be an effective means of breaking up the tribal structure because each individual could be manipulated and threatened more easily than the tribe as a whole. Many white people took advantage of the Indian and purchased his lands at a fraction of their actual value. The Indian was unprepared to handle property rights and uneducated as how he might use the land for his own welfare. The Allotment Act succeeded in reducing the Indian landscape from one hundred forty million acres to a comparatively small fifty million acres of the least desirable land. The white exploitation of the new Indian landholders resulted in severe disorganization of the Indian family.

The Civil War was a turning point in the history of Indian education. During the war there was a deterioration of race relations but after the war there arose a good deal of concern for the welfare of the Indians and the Federal government began to assume a larger role in their education. About 1867, there were two dominant points of view concerning the educating of Indians yet neither of these really considered what the Indian might want for himself. One view was that of coercing the Indian and was advocated by General William T. Sherman. This called for forced assimilation of the Indian. The feeling was that the Indian was unmotivated and that the point



of a sharp bayonet might be needed to convince the Indian to work in a white society. The other popular view of the time was the humanitarian point of view strongly supported by Nathaniel G. Taylor, then Commissioner of Indian Affairs. This was a movement of "persuasive tactics" in which Christian teachers would be sent among the Indians to prepare them for life in an Anglo-Saxon society. Congress published a report in 1868 revealing the deplorable status of Indians. This report grossly misunderstood the Indian problem and the suggested programs called for providing education, Christianization, and civilization for the Indians. The major consequences of this movement were that there arose an increased responsibility for the education of Indians by the Federal government, and provision was made for the off-reservation boarding school. One hundred thousand dollars was appropriated by Congress in 1870 for the operation of Federal industrial schools for Indians. The boarding schools began to house Indian students away from their homes in the 1870's. In 1882, legislation was passed to convert the old army forts into Indian schools. Most of the boarding schools were just abandoned army barracks, run in a rigid military fashion, with a great emphasis upon rustic vocational education. They were designed to separate the child from his home and reservation, strip him of his tribal lore and mores, force him to abandon his native language, and prepare him for never again returning to his people. The emphasis was on having the Indian children engaged in manual work rather than learning. When Indian parents refused to send their children to a boarding school with these credentials, the leverage was gained through Congress for the Secretary of the Interior to withhold food or subsistence from those Indian families whose children were not in school. Still, however, the boarding schools were unable to enroll all the Indian children. In 1919, for example, it was discovered that only 2,089

of an estimated 9,613 Navajo children were attending school. Through a government program, and due to the lack of schools on the reservation, Navajo children were then transported to boarding schools throughout the West and Southwest without parental consent. This became a type of government-sanctioned "kid-napping."

The last thirty years of the nineteenth century were years of anguish for the Indians. The Indian fought to defend himself from plundering settlers, compulsory and unsuitable education for his children, and later from the United States Cavalry. With the murder of Sitting Bull and the massacre of a Sioux band at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1890, the conquest of the Indian had been completed. Ironically, this was the same year that Congress appropriated money to cover the costs of Indians attending public schools. The treatment of the Indian by the white man has been full of just ironies with the white man professing to want to help the Indian with his problems and then "stabbing him in the back."

#### MERIAM REPORT AND NEW DEAL

Probably one of the most significant and understanding investigations into the field of Indian affairs was published in 1928. This was a report which was prepared by the Brookings Institution in Washington, D. C. under the direction of Lewis Meriam of the University of Chicago. The report was titled the "Meriam Report" and it led directly to one of the most creative and innovative periods in Indian affairs. The two major findings of the report were that Indians were regularly excluded from the management of their own affairs and that Indians were getting wholly substandard quality of services from government officials who were supposed to be serving their needs. Amazingly enough, these two findings of the report in 1928 remained

just as valid for the next forty years and until the last two years seemed to be an indication of a permanent status for the Indian. To a great extent, however, the Meriam Report helped to bring about a change in the public's attitude towards the treatment of the Indian. People became more sympathetic to the Indian's retention of his identity and such portions of his traditions as he chose to perpetuate. There arose more public opposition to the deliberate destruction of the Indian culture and of complete assimilation of all Indians. This philosophy was prominent in the writings of John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs in the Roosevelt administration in 1933, who attempted to overhaul the Federal Indian policy. Other writers of the time also became more attuned to the real needs of the Indians. In the report of the Commission of the Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian, a proper policy concerning Indians was described as "making the Indian a self-respecting and useful American citizen . . . restoring his pride of origin and faith in himself . . . and arousing his desire to share in the advantages of modern civilization."<sup>29</sup> In looking at needed changes in education, Collier started programs in bilingual education, adult basic education, training of Indian teachers, Indian culture and in-service teacher training. During his twelve years as Commissioner, Collier succeeded in closing sixteen boarding schools and in opening eighty-four day schools. In 1933, three-fourths of all Indian students were enrolled in Federal boarding schools but by 1943, two-thirds of Indian students were attending day schools.<sup>30</sup> The Citizenship Act of 1924 gave the Indian, the native citizen, his "official" United States' citizenship. This has been considered the approximate turning

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<sup>29</sup>Berry, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>30</sup>Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, op. cit., p. 156.

from a predominately Federal school operation to a public school operation where Indian youth attend schools operated by the state.

The key legislation of the period was the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 which ended the allotment period and laid the ground work for more autonomous tribal government. This was one of the few acts which had been reasonably discussed with the Indians and has become known as the "Indian bill of rights." The Reorganization Act allowed tribal ownership. Indians were given power to either veto or approve expenditures of tribal assets. They could obtain legal counsel and negotiate with the Federal or local governments. Finally, as a major plus factor of the Act, the Indians were to be educated, shown how to use their land, and assisted in construction of Indian projects, such as roads, irrigation, and forest conservation.

During the New Deal period, some of the most advanced approaches were made to break the educational barriers. Primer readers were written in dual language texts, illustrated by Indians in their environment, and told stories about Indians. Indian crafts had a place in the classroom as teaching materials. Indian lore was taught within the context of science and history study. Vocational education was now oriented to the community needs, as, for example, the unprecedented training in seafaring and commercial fishing once offered at the Wrangell Institute in Alaska. Education of the Indian began to move away from what the white man thought the Indian should have in the way of vocations, attitudes, and beliefs and began to consider education for the Indian as a way he could learn more about himself in relation to the white community. This was an attempt to give the Indian the power to control and direct his own education. The progress of the 1930's and 1940's came to an abrupt halt with the coming of World War II. At this time there was a substantial decrease in available funds and an increasing Congressional attitude of wanting to "de-Indianize the Indian." Some extremely sensitive

and perceptive people had recognized the needs of the Indians and some programs were begun but many of their programs and dreams were waylaid and would have to wait another thirty-five years before being presented again.

#### TERMINATION PROGRAM

The optimistic outlooks fostered by the Meriam Report and the New Deal period were followed by the very dark cloud of a Federal government plan of "termination." To most Indians both on and off the reservation this policy was considered a great catastrophe. Deloria wrote that "termination is the single most important problem of the American Indian people at the present time."<sup>31</sup> He called it just a "combination of the old systematic hunt and the deprivation of services" and "a new weapon in the ancient battle for Indian land."<sup>32</sup> Basically, termination was the ending of Federal services to Indians. The events leading up to termination all pointed against the readiness of the Indians for such a program.

The roots of the termination program probably got their start back in the New Deal period when new programs had been ushered in and it looked as if Indians would eventually be independent of Federal services. The Meriam Report had shown that the Indians were in a desperate situation. Pressures for reform coincided with the election of Franklin Roosevelt who in turn appointed John Collier to be the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Collier pushed reform and such legislation as the Wheeler-Howard Act (1934) which gave the reservations their first taste of self-government in nearly a century. Outlooks and optimism were greatly altered with the coming of the second world war and in 1944, the House Select Committee on Indian Affairs made recommenda-

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<sup>31</sup>Deloria, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

tions for a "final solution of the Indian problem." This was, in effect, a return to the pre-Meriam policy, and encouraged such proposals as taking elementary school age children from their homes and placing them in off-reservation boarding schools. In 1948, the Commissioner at the recommendation of Congress set up criteria for determining tribal readiness for withdrawal of Federal services. In 1949, Commissioner John Nichols argued for the development of services for the Indian. He felt that termination of the Indian was not the answer but he was not listened to. With Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Dillon Myer, in 1950 the termination policy was under a full head of steam. This policy included the coercive assimilation of American Indians and getting rid of Indians and their trust lands by terminating Federal recognition and services and relocating Indians in cities. In following this policy to the letter, and not showing any concern for the readiness of the Indians for termination, the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1952 closed Federal schools in Idaho, Michigan, Washington, and Wisconsin. Loans to Indian students which had been authorized in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 were discontinued. In 1953 a legislative base was established for the termination policy with the passage of Public Law 280 which transferred Federal jurisdiction over law and order on Indian reservations to individual states, and the House Concurrent Resolution 108 which called for an end of Federal services to Indians.

One revealing example of the consequences of the termination policy involved a public hearing in Portland, Oregon. The hearing was conducted by Senator Wayne Morse and Senator Ralph Yarborough. It showed that the dropout rates for the Klamath Indian children in Oregon had doubled since that tribe had been formally terminated by the Federal Government. There were also many tribes scattered throughout the state of Washington who suffered an increase in the numbers of school dropouts since termination with dropout rates ranging

anywhere from fifty to one hundred percent.<sup>33</sup> Much of this was due to the fact that the Indian tribe was not ready to have its government services cut off. The tribe was just terminated with no consideration of whether it could maintain itself. The termination policy was temporarily halted on September 18, 1958. On this day, the Secretary of the Interior, Fred Seaton, stated that no further tribes would be terminated without its consent. Much irreparable damage had already been done and the Indians' fear of termination continued on into the 1960's.

#### 1960'S AND TODAY

A study published in January 1961 by the Commission on Rights, Liberties, and Responsibilities of the American Indian was the first formal reaction to the termination policy. This study condemned the injustices of the termination policy, the paternalistic attitudes and practices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the inadequacy of services provided for Indians. It argued for the reorganization of the Bureau's educational programs, and an increasing Indian involvement in determining programs affecting Indians. These were the dominant ideas concerning Indian education in the 1960's.

One very important accomplishment in Indian affairs during the 1960's was the enactment of needed legislation such as the Economic Opportunity Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. These acts were especially important because they provided funds with which the Indians could better establish Indian programs for Indian needs. The Economic Opportunity Act allowed Indians the chance to participate in and control their own programs. Project Head Start was one of these and it was the first concerted

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<sup>33</sup>Berry, op. cit., p. III.



effort to work with the pre-school age Indian child in providing enriching experiences to better prepare him for the experiences he would find in school. Projects such as Upward Bound, Job Corps, and Volunteers in Service to America, better known as simply V.I.S.T.A., were all helpful as they provided a chance for a good amount of significant Indian participation. The Community Action Programs under the Economic Opportunity Act were set up on Indian reservations and were the most important innovation of the 1960's towards helping Indians to carry out their own programs. Over sixty Community Action Programs, involving one hundred and five Federal reservations in seventeen states now exist. The most important experiment in the field of Indian education in the 1960's was the creation of the Rough Rock Demonstration School on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. The initiative and funds for this project also came from the Office of Economic Opportunity. This experiment is an attempt to set up a school controlled by Indians. The Rough Rock Demonstration School is a private, nonprofit organization. It is run by a five-member school board which is completely Navajo. This school board is committed to the involvement of Indians in the working of the school. In the Rough Rock Demonstration School, tribal elders teach traditional materials, culturally-sensitive curriculum materials are used, and the bilingual approach to teaching English is practiced. The school is regarded not just as a place for the education of children, but it is also the focal point of the development of the local community. "Rough Rock has become a symbol of Indian participation and control and educational innovation, and has been extraordinarily influential in shaping a new policy in Indian education."<sup>34</sup> The success of the school speaks for itself and should provide a fine model for future educational innovation.

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<sup>34</sup>Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, op. cit., p. 16.



The Elementary and Secondary Education Act provided funds for improving the education of disadvantaged children. Title I of the Act was established to provide innovative programs for disadvantaged children. In fiscal year 1969, about nine million dollars was appropriated for Indians in Federal schools through this Act. Other titles of the Act help toward the development of special centers and the establishment of regional educational laboratories. Drop out prevention and bilingual education titles of the Act are of much help to many Indian youth.

In 1966 a Presidential Task Force Report recognized the need to reorganize the Bureau of Indian Affairs and of transferring the responsibility of Indian affairs from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Education was seen as a priority item as was Indian control of Indian education and an exemplary school system for Indians attending Federal schools. The Task Force found that there was still a need for a new policy to alleviate the Indian termination fears and to drastically reorganize the Bureau of Indian affairs in order that a Federal educational system could be set up properly.

Some specific statistics collected by the Subcommittee on Indian Education in 1969 are a major indictment against the education of American Indian youth. For example, one-fourth of the elementary and secondary school teachers in Federally operated schools, by their own admission, would prefer not to teach Indian children. Because of their treatment by white school personnel, Indian students, more than any other racial group, believe themselves to be below average in intelligence. Indian children in the twelfth grade have the poorest self-concept of all groups tested. The Coleman report gives evidence showing the close relationship between achievement of disadvantaged children and the way they feel about themselves and about their

future. In Ponca City, Oklahoma at an all Indian public elementary school a dropout rate of eighty-seven percent is experienced by the sixth grade. There is a ninety percent dropout rate in Indian schools in Nome, Alaska, with about one fourth of the students taking two to three years to get through the first grade. There is a sixty-two percent dropout rate in the Minneapolis Public Schools and between forty-five and seventy-five percent drop out rates statewide. California has an Indian drop out rate of about seventy percent. Students transferring from state-operated rural schools had the least chance of graduating, and native students who had received the majority of their elementary education in state-operated schools had the highest drop out rate. Seventy-five percent of the native drop outs tested revealed more than enough intelligence to complete high school.<sup>35</sup> Even today, the classroom and schoolroom are a battleground where the Indian child attempts to protect his integrity and identity as an individual by defeating the purposes of the school. The improvements and innovations made by the Federal government have just been too restricted to reach thousands of students who are silently rebelling and failing in the old schools across the nation which are still operating on the old "civilization and assimilation" principle. These schools have failed to understand and adapt to cultural differences and blame their failures on their students who in turn reinforce their feelings of powerlessness and defensiveness. Thus, one can see a perpetuation of the cycle of absenteeism, drop outs, the negative self-images, low achievement level, and academic failure of many Indian children. "The aggressive 'convert and civilize' approach taken by both the government and the missionaries has

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<sup>35</sup>Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

produced precisely the opposite response, and has caused Indians, in self-defense, to withdraw from contact and to preserve, however they could, the important elements of their own traditions."<sup>36</sup> The question of Indian education today is still one of too little Indian control, inadequate funding, and a few potentially successful experiments to set the needed direction of schools with Indian students across the nation.

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<sup>36</sup> Heather Robertson, Reservations Are for Indians (Toronto, Canada: James Lewis and Samuel, 1970), p. 286.

## Chapter 3

### COUNSELING WITH INDIAN STUDENTS

In order for the counselor to be effective in helping the Indian student, he must have or develop a deep insight into the needs of Indian students for guidance. There is a need not only to orient the Indian youth with the culture into which he has been born but also to help him to bridge the gaps between the white dominant culture and his Indian culture. He should have the freedom to choose and draw strength from both cultures by accepting the best of each culture. Over the generations, there has been much "culture stripping" of the Indian culture. The Indian has been taught the white man's ways as if the Indian ways were inferior, unacceptable, or animalistic. Still, the Indian has tenaciously held on to the many basic beliefs of his ancestors with a quiet, determined pride. The remnants of this pride must be recognized and appreciated for its beauty, usefulness, and uniqueness. In contrast to the dominant, non-Indian culture, the Indian culture places much more importance on such qualities as cooperation with others, a close harmony with nature, an orientation with living in the present, respect for age, a lack of time consciousness, and the idea of non-investment for future events. The greatest challenge for counselors is in recognizing these values and helping Indian youth in ways which assure their continued pride in Indian heritage, a development of self-respect, and confidence in their ability to function in this technological age if they so desire. This means that there must be more attention given to the Indian's educational motivation, goal choosing, and his overcoming of language handicaps.

## THE WHITE COUNSELOR

The white counselor must be aware of the different points of reference between himself and his Indian client. Overt actions and verbalizations of the Indian student may be misleading or misunderstood by the white counselor. Indian children's thought processes differ from the white counselor because these thoughts are based on different cultural experiences. The white counselor must be aware of his own cultural biases and the attitudes of those with whom he is working. The white culture is difficult or impossible for the Indian student to comprehend completely. Indian youth approach their world at school from the only frame of reference they know. This frame of reference is their own Indian way of family and tribal life. The white helper must learn as much as possible about the Indian's frame of reference, the Indian way of life, and the developmental attitudes of Indians in order to better relate and understand the Indian youth's true feelings. The counselor is faced with the need to know each Indian youth as a unique personality. "Like children everywhere, Indian children have a developing inner-self that is precious, that is sensitive, that is individual."<sup>37</sup> Communication between the white counselor and the Indian child will occur only in terms of this inner-self. The white counselor is viewed as an agent of change towards white values. Because of this, the Indian youth will confide in him only if he has trust and confidence in the counselor as a person. Among Indians, the white man's word is questionable in integrity and many Indian children are instructed by their parents to be wary of what the white man may say. When the Indian youth feels that the white counselor does not respect or understand

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<sup>37</sup>Hildegard Thompson, Education For Cross-Cultural Enrichment (Lawrence, Kansas: Publication Service, Haskell Institute, 1964), p. 290.

their inner-self image or inadvertently makes the Indian feel inferior, they will not reveal their inner-self as a means of self-protection. Often, the Indian simply rejects the English language and uses this as a barrier to communication with the white counselor. This holds true also in the classroom where the Indian youth does not try to do his best work because he considers the mandatory usage of English as a subtle device or deceitful trick in which Indians are further stripped of their Indian heritage and ways are made over into the image of a white man. Beset by all these cultural disparities, it is often very difficult for a white counselor to be able to counsel the Indian student with his educational, vocational, social, and personal problems. Many of the Indian's adjustment and personal problems are the direct result of the entire white-run educational system. In spite of the obstacles, a sensitive counseling program is an essential part of both the high school-elementary and the post high school programs if Indian students are to have the very best opportunity to reach their full potential.

Counseling techniques used for the Indian student must take into consideration all the particular feelings and cultural values with which the Indian child has grown up and integrated into his own personality and value system. Non-directive counseling, such as the "client-centered" approach of Carl Rogers, would probably be ineffective in working with Indian students because many Indian students are extremely non-verbal and passive. Since many Indian children have been taught not to trust the white man, it may be difficult or impossible for the white counselor to establish a "warm and accepting relationship." In many cases, the white counselor may find that the most productive approach is one that is honest, simple, and somewhat directive. After the client has developed trust in the counselor, there may be much more self-expression and affectiveness on the part of the Indian student.

### Language Handicap and Tests

One very significant and noticeable difference in counseling with Indian youth rather than with white youth is in the results of tests. Indian youth are encouraged by their Indian community to cooperate and help each other. The competitiveness of testing is alien to them and consequently they usually don't score as they might. The fact that Indian youth score lower on the standardized tests than the white youth is partially due to this absence of desiring to compete with fellow students. To a large degree, the difference in test scores between white students and Indian students is due to the fact that the tests are not culture free, that is, the tests are structured more to a white middle-class group of test takers. Indian students have often grown up using the native language and don't really encounter English until they reach the first grade. This presents a major handicap for the Indian child attempting to learn English, and to read and write at the same time. As the Indian student progresses through school, he gradually gains some skills in English usage but he is frequently a very poor reader. Test results are often merely an indication that the Indian student hasn't had a good background in English and that he is thus a slow reader. The counselor must take the reasons for the Indian students apparent lack of success on standardized tests into account and not rule the results off as an undeniable assertion of the Indian's inferior intelligence, which is definitely not so. Counseling techniques must also be extremely sensitive to the Indian student with his ambiguous status between two cultures.

### Counseling Techniques

In clarifying information to the Indian student as to other students of minority-disadvantaged groups, often it is quite productive to include a visual

dimension to counseling. The use of visual techniques such as graphs, charts, microfilms, booklets, life career games, videotapes, and diagrams enable the counselor to communicate more clearly some complex problems. This should help the Indian student gain more insight into his problems and guide him towards better mental health. This insight includes his apprehending and understanding the relationships between his feelings, ideas, events, conditions, and attitudes. If the counselor fails to provide the needed insight, then these relationships are not seen clearly by the client. The visual dimension can minimize misunderstanding between the counselor and the Indian student. The counselor might also have some visual artifacts and pictures on display in his office to show his genuine appreciation of the Indian culture.

In Farlow's book, An Equal Chance, techniques from Glasser's "reality therapy" are applied for counseling with Indian students. Farlow states that reality therapy is a potent therapy for working with the Indian youth who needs desperately to develop a positive self-image. The counselor would use a combination of behavior modification techniques, sound learning theory, and proper reinforcement. This method would be concerned with the present, not the past. The three basic components of reality therapy which the counselor would use with the Indian are outlined in Farlow's book. First, there would be the open and honest involvement of the counselor with the Indian student to help him begin to face reality. This would include the adjustment of the Indian to finding a better understanding of the role of the Indian in the dominant white culture. The counselor would reject that behavior which is unrealistic but would still accept the client and maintain involvement with him. The counselor would then help the Indian student to learn better ways to fulfill his needs within the confines and boundaries of reality. While the Indian student needs a role to follow in order to achieve identity, much of



the student's search involves his quest for dignity and self-respect. During the counseling session, the counselor should ask in-depth interview questions looking for the individual's assets and strongest attributes. This session is not for the purpose of accentuating problems or negative personal characteristics. Farlow maintains that only after counselor involvement has been achieved along with an identity and a feeling of self-worth can one reasonably expect to become goal-oriented.<sup>38</sup>

The proper use of reality therapy by the counselor has many good features in working with the Indian. First, it is vitally concerned with the Indian student's self-image in a world which often discriminates against equality and success for anyone clinging to cultural values not acceptable to the dominant culture. Next, it encourages the counselor to be actively involved with the client in understanding cultural differences of the present time. Finally, it works through the necessary process of rejecting unrealistic behavior while establishing self-respect and a developing self-image which is essential if the Indian is to become goal-oriented and plan properly for his future. If the counselor can develop an understanding of the feelings and cultural values of the Indian students, he has a far better chance of helping each Indian student to understand his own individuality and capabilities.

#### SPECIAL CONCERNS OF HIGH SCHOOL

The counselor in the Indian high school is concerned with a variety of problems stemming from the maladjustment of the student at school, in his home community, or in a combination of these two. The Indian student often finds that the new environment of the school staffed mainly with white personnel is

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<sup>38</sup> Barbara Farlow, *An Equal Chance: Handbook For Counseling Indian Students* (Stevens Point: Wisconsin State University, 1971), p. 19.

an alien setting. The symptoms of the maladjusted Indian student include a high incidence of social withdrawal, excessively high drop out rates, and a noticeable lack of student leadership. Most of these symptoms which are of special concern to the staff working with Indian students are actually caused by the presence and lack of understanding of these same school personnel. In addition to the common maladjustment problems of students found at most high schools, the high school staff educating Indian students must realistically face the special concerns of the Indian students enrolled there.

### Social Withdrawal

In 1968, an exploratory Pupil Personnel Services project was conducted by Arizona State University at Phoenix Indian High School. One of the essential tasks of the study was to find out some of the special problems in the Indian boarding school and then developing techniques and a program structure to work with them. A counseling program was established for current contingencies as well as long range preventative programs. The central focus of the exploratory study was on social withdrawal which is a common problem unique to the Indian school. Social withdrawal in the school was widespread in the student body at Phoenix Indian High school but it was noticeably more frequent among the Indian girls. The most obvious symptoms of social withdrawal were loneliness and a low self-esteem. An experiment with group counseling for eight socially withdrawn girls was conducted for three months and was highly successful in relieving the problems of social withdrawal. The counselor was the group leader and directed group sessions. The group followed a series of discussion topics which were chosen by the group members. Occasionally, the girls asked for self-exploration reports from other members of the group. Counseling techniques used included reflection, interpretation, confrontation, and positive reinforcement. The key to the initial success of group meetings were facilitative techniques which made the girls more at ease and helped them to grow closer together. The clients began to feel more

trust and involvement as participating members of the group. A self-evaluation form was filled in by the participants after three meetings and these were readily discussed by the group. The evaluation of the results seem to be an encouraging sign for the use of well-structured groups in counseling with Indian students. Although the results were necessarily subjective, being based on observations of group leaders, it was noted that the girls who participated were attending school activities more frequently, had developed a strong kinship for each other, and were less cautious about referring themselves to a counselor with their personal problems. Previously, the girls had not visited the counselor voluntarily for any reason. The group counseling had allowed the girls an opportunity to talk about personal concerns and had given them a chance to better understand themselves. All the time, a certain confidence was being established by the girls about the helpfulness and desirability of counseling.<sup>39</sup> This type of group counseling might help Indian students overcome many common problems in those schools where students appear particularly withdrawn and not availing themselves of the counseling facilities which are present for their direction and guidance.

### Drop Outs

The number of drop outs of Indian youth from High School has been another special concern of those working in Indian education. In 1959, the Bureau of Indian Affairs estimated that sixty percent of all Indian youth in school dropped out. This can be compared to a drop out rate among all other American students that same year of thirty-seven percent. The term, "drop out," according to the 1969 survey of the Bureau was any pupil who had left

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<sup>39</sup>Robert L. Armstrong and Barbara Holmes, "Counseling for Socially Withdrawn Girls," *Journal of American Indian Education*, Vol. 10 (January, 1971), p. 4-7.

school between the eighth grade and high school graduation. According to a study of a twelve state area in "Indian country" made by the Northwest and Southwest Regional Laboratories, this drop out rate has decreased over the last ten years for both the Indian and the white student but that the Indian rate was still substantially higher than the white rate. The current rate for Indian youth is slightly more than forty-two percent which can be compared to a drop out rate of twenty-seven percent for all Americans. The 1969 findings for the Indian drop out rate were based on a sample survey of 2,057 pupils who, in the fall of 1962, were enrolled in the eighth grade in Bureau, private, and public schools. The schools in the survey were in those states having a considerable concentration of Indians. These included such states as Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, southern Utah, southern Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North and South Dakota. A comparison of the Northwest and Southwest area and the national drop out rate showed that in grades eight to twelve, the drop out rates were twenty-seven percent for the nation, 47.7 percent for the Northwest and 38.7 percent for the Southwest. Each pupil in the study was traced through his school records to the eventual point of drop out, death, graduation, or continuation in school. The reasons given for the high drop out rates were the need to earn money, family mobility, and lack of academic ability. Quite often, the impetus to leave school was the result of a common failure to establish effective contact between the school and the pupil. Of a special note was the low drop out rates given for the Navajos of Arizona. Just a little more than twenty years ago about one-fourth of Navajo school children were attending school. This meant that an estimated eighteen thousand were not in school. The reason for the remarkable decrease in the drop out rate for this tribe may be seen in the methods used by the Navajos.

In 1946, one of the most innovative and daring programs of education for overage Indian youth began. This program attempted to provide them with a minimum language usage, social and employment skills to enter the job market

or catch up to their proper grade in school. Using teacher aids who spoke the Navajo language, and special materials, a special Navajo program was begun in a determined drive to get out-of-school Navajo children into school and to devise programs suited to the needs of overage undereducated children. All available space, including that at Chemawa School in Oregon and the Chilocco School in Oklahoma, was utilized for that purpose. In the 1950's, a further step up of the program occurred when the Bordertown program, in which dormitory students attended local public high schools, began to operate along with an accelerated school building program. The results of this program were extremely beneficial. In 1968, for example, more than forty six thousand Navajo children between the ages of six and eighteen, over ninety percent, were in school. This rate is close to the national average. Two key factors of the program appear to be the fact that the students knew their personal goals and the program was a native-Indian program. Sensitive and understanding counseling could help the Indian client to decide upon personal goals. A change to an Indian-oriented program would have to come about through the influence of the counselor working with teachers and school administrators. This is required also of the successful school program which attacks the problems of the culturally handicapped by demonstrating the close relationship between the school and the Indian's life, by encouraging and assisting the Indian to become a good reader, and by developing a strong vocational educational program to help Indian students decide what they would like to do most. There is a definite need to develop initiative and a sense of responsibility basic to the preparation for college as well as for new jobs.

The heart of the education process is still the skill, dedication and personality of the teacher. Foremost among the requisite qualities of the teacher is respect for the pupil. True respect for Indian pupils requires a persistent confidence in their potential. The teacher's respect is the secret

of contact between the child and the school. Teachers and administrators must join with the school counselors in examining their attitudes toward culturally different children. School personnel need to develop a dedication to educating the Indian youth as a unique opportunity it can offer to give children hope. Finally, because the school's success depends to a considerable degree on the parent's attitudes and the staff's knowledge of family circumstances, the school must become a neighborhood institution among the Indian community. All these elements are necessary in order to foster self-respect, mutual respect, and a sense of identification of the Indian student with the school and the nation. The Indian student must be assisted in finding just where he fits into the social scheme of a modern world. When these things are done, then the incidence of dropping out which is too common among Indian students will be greatly reduced.

#### Leadership models

One of the present needs of Indians is the need for leadership models with whom the younger Indians can identify and emulate. There is a new theme of Indian authority and responsibility in the education of Indian children and youth. Since the presence of Indian leadership is presently very minute, programs are needed to develop future leaders who can give pride and direction to Indian youth. Besides a good education, another vital key to helping Indian people is the development of leadership among Indian students in order to help them move ahead and enable them to survive and prosper in a bicultural society. This development of leadership capabilities among Indian students must be planned for and incorporated into the educational system. Indian students must be given constructive involvement which will result in a personal commitment. This will bring about choices, judgments, and personal investments which will help mold strong future leaders. Frequent practice in making decisions will affect their lives and their daily activities in the



beginning of trust which will meet a basic need of Indian youth. The satisfaction of decision-making leads to security and this kind of security will in turn lead to self-reliance. The development of this self-reliance will enable the Indian student to be better able to accept risks and take a position on an issue about which he feels strongly.

A program designed to increase and enhance the leadership qualities of Indian students was conducted in the fall of 1969 by Frank Chapman at the Phoenix Indian High School. The objectives of the program were formalized by the counselors from the Pupil Personnel Services department of the school for the twenty-two participating students. An attempt was made to develop skills and techniques which were considered necessary for leadership roles and an attempt was made to enhance the Indian's self-concept through cultural enrichment. The program participants were Indian students who held formal leadership positions in the high school and those Indian students who were not in formal positions of leadership but who demonstrated leadership potential. The counseling staff explained the objectives of the program and acted as resource personnel for the group of students. The students were free to choose their course of action and to plan their activities. Involvement in the student group was active with the students working towards involving all the members in the discussion. Occasionally, the counseling staff presented short talks on leadership skills, concepts and techniques. The students would then discuss these topics to enhance their understanding. The counseling staff interpreted the group dynamics which were occurring within the group and identified different styles of leadership being used by the Indian students at different times. This immediate reinforcement of the leadership development helped to provide as complete a learning experience as possible. Free and open discussion of campus problems acted as a stimulus for the developing student leaders to voice their concerns to various administrative staff in

the school and also at the Bureau of Indian Affairs office. Initial, subjective examination of observable outcomes indicated that the leadership program was successful. The participating students helped to bring about several needed changes in the school and were instrumental in putting students in control of the student recreation hall and the student store. Programs like these which stress "learning by doing" are helpful because they get the student involved in new experiences and broaden his horizons. They also help him learn basic leadership techniques, give him the opportunities to use these in practice, and provide him with the opportunity to observe others in leadership activities. "A leadership workshop for students, developed by students, would provide a great deal of improvement and experience and could be a vehicle for the development of adult Indian leadership."<sup>40</sup> Indian leadership development is important if the Indian is to get the skills and self-confidence he needs to find meaning and direction in his life.

#### Placement and Follow-Up

The guidance services of placement and follow-up are of special concern to counselors in high school, because after graduation, many Indian students finding that they have no skills and becoming disenchanted with the values of the dominant culture return to life on the reservation. Often, this signifies a life of poverty and depression and dead-end hopes. Logically, the justification for a program of Indian education would be the placement of graduates. After high school, the Indian student should be placed in either a vocational or academic situation which will afford him the maximum opportu-

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<sup>40</sup>Kenneth Patch, "Leadership Training Program At Phoenix Indian High School, Journal of American Indian Education, Vol. 10 (May, 1969), p. 17.



ities for his self-improvement, and for increasing his value to the community in which he lives. The counselor has an obligation to each student to help him carefully consider his particular interests, skills, abilities, needs, aptitudes, and limitations. "Guidance and placement are concerned with all the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical experiences the student will encounter in his quest for wholesome living in a very complex society."<sup>41</sup>

The counselor can help the Indian student in making post high school plans through astute analysis of the various information and data available concerning the student. After the student has been "placed" on the job or in an institution of advanced technical or academic learning, a careful follow-up is needed to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the education program. The follow-up should be an indication of the schools interest in their well-being. It is most effective when it helps the graduate to keep a wholesome attitude towards his employment, or towards his academic pursuits and instructors. Effective follow-up encourages graduates to use their best physical, social, religious, economic, and moral qualities. It should provide a successful adjustment to the ever-increasing complexities of this age of space.

#### A HIGHER EDUCATION

The consistently high drop out rates of Indian students from college clearly indicate the need for more adequate education in preparation for college and a better understanding by teachers, administrators, and counselors of the problems and needs of Indian students. Bureau of Indian Affairs recognizes that out of four hundred Indian students in Bureau high schools,

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<sup>41</sup>Thompson, Education For Cross-Cultural Enrichment, op. cit., p. 218.

two hundred and forty will graduate from high school, sixty-seven are likely to attend college, and of these only nineteen will graduate from college. Despite this, seventy-five percent of Indian students have expressed a definite desire to attend college, three percent have indicated a desire to do graduate studies, and less than eighteen percent wanted their education to end after high school. Hamblin found that 91.1 percent of the Apache and Navajo high school seniors in his study desired a higher education.<sup>42</sup> Studies seem to increasingly point out that interest in higher education is strong among Indians. Today, in fact, more Indians are going to college than ever before. Estimates show that there is somewhere around four thousand Indian college students. This is a marked increase over previous years. Havinghurst found that in 1936 only one out of fifty high school Indian students who graduated were going on to college. In 1950, this ratio had changed to one out of every six.<sup>43</sup> While enrollments of Indian college students is on the increase, the percentage of American Indians who go to college is low when compared with that of non-Indians. The teachers and administrators in Indian schools usually have less ambitious hopes for their Indian students' success in college. There is quite a disparity between the educational goals of students and the expectations of teachers and administrators. Studies have shown that teacher expectation, being what it is, has a very important effect on student achievement. Teachers looked more towards personality development, socialization, and citizenship as the most likely educational objectives for Indian students.

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<sup>42</sup>John R. Hamblin, "A Study of Some of the Important Factors Which Encourage Indian Students in the Apache and Navajo Counties in Arizona to Seek a Higher Education after High School Graduation." Unpublished Master's report, Brigham Young University (1963), p. 71.

<sup>43</sup>R. J. Havinghurst, Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, (May, 1957).

### The Indian College Student

A very general description of the Indian college student would include several of these factors. The Bureau of Indian Affairs high school graduate is, on the average, two years or more behind his non-Indian peers in terms of achievement scores when he graduates from high school. He is somewhat older than his fellow students, more likely to be male, and usually unmarried. His precollege educational experiences usually include a greater variety of schools, and a more frequent change in schools attended.<sup>44</sup> He is more likely to have attended a smaller school than the non-Indian, received less individual counseling, to have completed fewer units in mathematics and more in the vocational subjects. The Indian usually has participated in less extracurricular activities and received fewer academic recognition. He is likely to have been raised on a reservation, to have parents whose educational level is lower than that of non-Indians, and much less likely to have siblings who have graduated from college.

The Indian student is usually unsuccessful in his efforts to complete a college education. Despite financial aid and services provided, there is a high drop out rate from college. The dimensions for judging success or failure in college are many and include social adjustment, personal adjustment, academic adjustment, grade point average, and successful completion of the college program. Not only do Indians have a higher drop out rate, they also receive lower grades than non-Indians. Zintz, in a study of the records of the University of New Mexico, between 1954 and 1958 found that seventy percent

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<sup>44</sup>John Artichoker, and Neil M. Palmer, The Sioux Indian Goes to College (University of South Dakota, Vermillion: Institute of Indian Studies, 1959), p. 71.

of those studied dropped out with low grades, twenty percent were enrolled at the time of the study, and only ten percent had received their degrees. The ten percent who eventually graduated with the forty-nine percent for all college freshmen at the University of New Mexico. Of the thirty percent in the University, or who had received degrees, the majority were at one time on academic probation. Studies have revealed a number of different reasons for the relatively high drop out rate of Indians from college. One commonly cited reason is insufficient money, especially for clothing and other personal needs. Artichoker and Palmer found this to be a decisive factor in the Indian's academic failure.<sup>45</sup> Financial difficulties were most severe for those attending college at least a year. Artichoker and Palmer also discovered through the use of the Mooney Problem Check List, an instrument designed to reveal the problems of college students, and a second questionnaire designed to elicit information on problems directly related to Indian identity. Besides the insufficient funds, the study pointed out the other two problems of greatest significance to Indian students. One of these was poor academic preparation for college, especially in mathematics and science. The other concerned the Indian's inability to relate himself to the future, especially as regards his educational and vocational objectives.<sup>46</sup> Adjustment problems arising from the cultural gap between the college environment and the Indian way of life make it more difficult for the Indian student to succeed in college. Zintz reaffirms this finding and states that "the value system which gives direction to living and determines life goals for Indians has not established the kinds of motivations, aspirations, and thought patterns

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<sup>45</sup>Artichoker, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

necessary for success in college."<sup>47</sup>

The Indian often internalizes the expectations of teachers and administrators. When these school personnel believe that the Indian student is unfit for college work, these feelings are picked up and incorporated as part of the self-image. This undercuts the Indian's self-confidence and may play a vital part in his lack of success in college. The language difficulty is thought to be a major barrier. McGrath found that facility with English, as measured by standard tests and instructor's evaluations, was definitely correlated with success in college.<sup>48</sup> A large amount of the retardation of the Indian student is due to his lack of verbal-communication skill. The bilingual student often lacks self-confidence and has difficulty learning and retaining class material. The Indian student faced with all these handicaps in getting a college education is further perplexed by guidance and counseling services which are woefully inadequate. Counselors in Indian school systems frequently are dorm managers and disciplinarians and are little interested in guiding Indians into higher education. While Bureau guidance counselors meet civil service requirements, few of them are state-certified professional counselors. A 1969 survey of the Navajo area school system showed that only thirty of one hundred and sixty guidance counselors were professional counselors certified by the state in which they worked. While the knowledge of the personal and social adjustment of the Indian college student remains inconclusive, it is definitely known that they do have academic problems as evidenced by low grades, high drop out rates, and a

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<sup>47</sup>Miles V. Zintz, Education Across Cultures (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Book Company, 1963) p. 78.

<sup>48</sup>G. D. McGrath, Higher Education of Southwestern Indians with Reference to Success and Failure (1962), p. 84.

failure to graduate.

### The Transition To College

Little effort has been made to help the Indian in his transition from high school to college. There is a need for more counselors and guidance services for Indian students to help clarify the values and institutional requirements of the dominant society and to help the Indian to better understand his particular interests, desires, and abilities. This must be done in order that he may make a happier and more complete adjustment to a major area of study for which he is best suited. The most important factors which are related to the academic success or failure of the Indian college student include the library facilities, the availability of a good counseling and tutoring program, the type and length of orientation program, number of friends and roommates, residential facilities, and involvement in extra-curricular activities. McGrath made a comprehensive study of fifty-two institutions of higher learning in the Southwest. He found that only a few institutions attempt to identify Indian students on their campuses or supply special programs for them. Only four offered orientation programs for high school graduates prior to entering college. Nine of the institutions provided special guidance and counseling services to Indians. The usual guidance and counseling service was made up of a special advisor to the Indian student although three institutions granted released time to faculty to help perform this service. Only four of the fifty-two institutions had a tutoring service for Indian students. It was further revealed that most Indian students who were enrolled in the Southwest were in the seven institutions which provided the most services.<sup>49</sup> The results of this study are an indica-

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<sup>49</sup>McGrath, op. cit., p. 73.

tion of the inadequate programs which are available to incoming Indian college students.

A promising attempt is being made across the country by Federal agencies and various colleges to develop innovative programs which will help the Indian student make the transition from high school to college a less traumatic experience. Innovative examples of these programs are the Upward Bound projects, the Fort Lewis College program, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs' backing of the Institute of American Indian Arts. The Office of Economic Opportunity, in a pilot program launched in 1965 called Upward Bound, was a program which brought high school students from low income families together at college for a special program which emphasized the use of skills like reading, writing, developing thought processes, and explaining ideas. Of ten thousand Upward Bound students who graduated from high school in 1968 only four percent were Indian. There are many more Indians who could benefit from the program. Of the students in the program who were 1967 high school graduates, eighty percent were admitted to college. Of these, ninety-two percent were still in college as of April, 1968.

A summer precollege intercultural program at Fort Lewis College is another attempt to help the Indian make a satisfactory adjustment to college. This program is an intensive study of the English language for bilingual students, a guidance and counseling program, a tutorial program, and an intensive mathematics program which lasts for six weeks prior to the fall enrollment. About two hundred students, ninety percent of them Indian, participated in the program. The program was Federally funded by Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965. This is an example of the cooperation between the institution of higher learning and the Federal government in providing Indian students a better chance in college. The Bureau of Indian



Affairs has had excellent success with the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This institution works to instill pride in Indian students and to give them the self-affirmation they will need to enter college. It stresses the Indian's cultural roots and creative self-expression. The Institute allows Indian students to continue their education for a thirteenth and fourteenth year in order to give them a better educational background for pursuing a college degree. Between 1966 and 1968, 86.2 percent of the graduating students continued education beyond high school, 23.2 percent of these went to college, and 63 percent went to the Institute's post-graduate program or on to formal vocational training. Of the students who graduated from the Institute in the fourteenth grade, 42.2 percent went on to college. The initial successes of these types of programs are a clear indication of the benefits of precollege orientation programs for helping Indians make a satisfactory adjustment to the rigors of academic learning in an entirely new environment.

In helping the Indian make the transition from high school to college, the counselor must be concerned with the individual's proper selection for a major which is best suited for him. If the Indian student is in the wrong major field for his personal interests and aptitudes, then a considerable amount of dissatisfaction and discouragement will threaten his continued status in college. From the studies of Artichoker and Palmer, and McGrath similar findings were made regarding Indian students selections of majors. Education was the most popular selection followed by business and engineering. Few Indians chose social work, anthropology, social sciences, art or the humanities.<sup>50</sup> Based on this finding, one might conclude that Indian students

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<sup>50</sup>Berry, op. cit., p. 72.



see teaching, engineering or a trade, and business as their primary occupational goals. Some disturbing evidence is available that when Indians select their major fields, they may not be choosing fields of their real interest. Abrahams administered the Kuder Personal Preference test to a selected group of Southwest Indian college students. The results showed that they scored highest in the areas of social services, artistic and clerical interests, and lowest in mechanical and outdoor interests.<sup>51</sup> Ross and Ross in a study of the vocational choices of Apache Indians reached some surprising conclusions. These Indian students indicated the least amount of interest in social-persuasive activities and in literary and scientific interests.<sup>52</sup> There appears to be some discrepancy between the findings on vocational interests and vocational choices. It is evident that more studies are needed to determine the vocational interests, preferences, and aptitudes of Indian youth and then to find the relationship of these to areas of study selected in college. If it is true that Indians are selecting areas of least interest as their major subject, then they will most likely be dissatisfied with what they find in college. This might also help to explain some of the reasons behind the low achievement level and high drop out rates of Indian college students.

#### VOCATIONAL TRAINING

A solid and up-dated system of vocational training should be provided for those Indian students who desire a skill or trade rather than college or immediate employment in a low-skilled manual job. In August of

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<sup>51</sup>Ina Abrahams, "Vocational Interest of Selected Indian College Students as Measured by the Kuder Preference Record," Journal of American Indian Education, II:1:20-24, (October, 1962).

<sup>52</sup>W.T.Ross and G.V. Ross, "Backgrounds of Vocational Choice: An Apache Study, Mescalero Reservation," Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXXV: 270-275, (January, 1957).

1969, a national conference was held to encourage the development of more vocational education programs for American Indians. The conference was sponsored by the New Mexico State University with a grant from the Division of Comprehensive and Vocational Research of the Bureau of Research. The two major conclusions of this conference were that not all Indian students have the same problems in relation to vocational education and that vocational education programs were inadequate to meet the training needs of Indians in urban and rural areas. The characteristics and life styles of Indians differ in the various regions of the country. The problems of urban Indians are, for example, much different from those problems of Indians on reservations in rural areas. Generally, there are too few vocational education programs to meet the needs of the Indian people. There are also too few qualified counselors in the field of vocational education and selection to really help Indian youth. The Meriam Report of 1928 had criticized ineffective vocational training programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For a time, vocational courses were improved and an attempt made to relate them to the economic base of the reservation.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' relocation program which began in 1952 pointed out the glaring deficiencies in the Bureau's high school vocational program. The relocation program was designed to provide a means so that Indians could leave the economically depressed reservations and go to the urban areas where the jobs were more plentiful. The Indian would go to the city and get Bureau help in his search for employment and a place to live. It became apparent that the Indian with his undereducation, poor training, rural background, and cultural differences was not prepared to compete in the labor market or make an adequate social adjustment to his new environment. From 1953 to 1957, thirty percent of the Indian relocatees returned to the reservations in the same year. Shortly, most of the other Indians returned

to the reservation until in 1968 when a follow-up study revealed that there were only seventeen percent remaining in the urban areas in which they had originally been relocated. The failure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Indian relocation program had two major effects on Bureau policy. In 1956, legislation was passed which provided training for Indian adults so they could meet requirements of jobs in the cities where they planned to work. The failure pointed out the shortcomings of the Bureau's vocational education program in high schools operated by the Bureau. In 1963, a new policy was passed to end vocational training in Bureau schools. Now, the Bureau provides prevocational education to students which would qualify them for admission to post-secondary schools. At the ninth grade level, this curricula includes an emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, a series of "practical arts" courses such as purchasing, packaging and money management, and field trips which are designed to acquaint students with the various occupational fields available. At the high school level the curricula includes preparatory shop courses which give students a basic knowledge and experience in different occupational fields. The curricula, however, now places an emphasis on academic courses.

Everett Edington and Darrell Willey have done a good amount of research on occupational training for the Indian and have developed these recommendations in order to help improve the vocational preparation of Indians.<sup>53</sup> Edington and Willey feel that vocational and technical education should be developed for the Indian on the regional, state, and local levels. Recruitment would be conducted in order to encourage Indians to enter existing programs in vocational education. These programs would recognize

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<sup>53</sup> Everett Edington, and Darrell Willey, "Occupational Training for America's Forgotten Minority," Journal of American Indian Education, Vol. 10 (January, 1972), p. 15-20.

cultural differences and the occupational needs of the Indian people. Edington and Willey feel that it is just as important to know how to obtain and keep a job as it is to know the skills necessary to perform the operation. In-service training courses would be held for the persons teaching Indians in order to emphasize the fact that definite occupational skills are needed if the Indian is to obtain and hold a job. Federal funding, such as the funds provided by the Johnson-O'Malley Act, should be ear-marked by the local schools with Indian students for vocational education in direct proportion to the number of students who are not college-bound in that particular school district. There should be an American Indian representative on the State Vocational Education Advisory Council in every state with a significant Indian population. Vocational training should be an integral part of the school system enrolling large numbers of Indians. Pupil guidance should be provided to help the student to understand himself and to provide him with the essential information so that he can make a wise choice. Prevocational information would be provided in grades K through six, more specific vocational guidance in the junior high age group and increasing as the student progresses through school. The following table was devised by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a progressive development of vocational awareness and decision-making through the school years.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Thompson, op. cit., p. 116.

Table 3  
THE PROGRAM PATTERN OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

<u>Post High School</u>	<u>Professional Training</u>	<u>Technical Training</u>	<u>Post High School Training</u>
			Trades and Service Occupations
	Academic	Academic Related to Vocational Choice	Vocational Skill Development
<u>High School and Special Program</u>		<u>Decision Level</u>	
	Academic		Vocational Exploration
	Academic		Guidance and Orientation to World of Work
<u>Elementary</u>	Basic Skills in English (Speaking, reading, writing, spelling). Basic Numerical Skills (Arithmetic). Social Skills (Real life experiences, social studies). Creative Arts (Music, art, dramatizing).		

This chart shows the pattern of education regarding vocational decisions as the pupil moves toward and through vocational schools. The elementary years indicate that basic learning which is needed for successful living. The high school and special programs provide for vocational exploration and orientation to the world of work. Academic and social learning is still a major part of the program. At the decision-making stage of deciding what to do with his life, the student must decide whether he has sufficient interest and aptitude for college work, a technical occupation, or a trade which does not make such heavy demands upon academic talent. Counseling, basic education, remedial education, skill training, job placement, and retraining should be provided

to help the undereducated and underemployed Indian. Much of this type of work can be done through job skill centers. Business and industry should structure training programs to the ability level of Indians. Management and supervisory positions in business and industry should be made available to capable Indians. Good communications with representatives of labor could help to create more job opportunities and skilled trades for Indians. Finally, a more adequate method of selecting Indian youth for training and employment should be developed. Standardized tests are only one indicator of the abilities of Indians. Sensitive and understanding counseling is needed to provide the guidance Indian youth need in the search for the fullest development of their talents and innate potential.

## Chapter 4

### PROSPECTIVE OUTLOOK

Careful planning with Indian parents and tribal leaders must be undertaken if the education of Indian youth is to be culturally sensitive and academically meaningful. A consideration must be made of the role of Indian values and the placement of Indian graduates in evaluating the effectiveness of Indian education. The Indian culture is land oriented. The Indian is usually happiest in his land environment, and therefore, a way must be found to bring the benefits of education and technology to him, rather than to have circumstances force him into entering an alien setting. Presently, the schools stress the Anglo-American values of competition, upward mobility, and "future orientation" which are all in conflict with the values of the Indian youth's family and community. The Indian pupil feels like he is "outside the dominant stream of culture." Sensitive curriculum materials and educational staff are seriously lacking as are bilingual education efforts.

Indian education should not be isolated from other aspects of Indian life. It is an integral part of the entire Indian community. Along with educational innovation which will assure a culturally-aware Indian education, more concrete assistance must be provided the Indians for economic development, job training, and technical and legal representation in water rights, tribal rights, and oil lease matters. The Subcommittee on Indian Education, in the 1969 report to the ninety-first Congress, felt that we had a "moral and legal obligation" to our Indians today as we did after World War II to our European allies and adversaries. The Federal government needs to reassure Indians of "legislative changes; administrative changes; policy changes; and



structural changes—all of which are geared to making Indian education programs into models of excellence, not of bureaucratic calcification."<sup>55</sup> Initial steps must be taken to get a true understanding of Indian educational problems through top-level conferences with Indian leaders, Indian youth, and educational resource personnel who have a working knowledge and sensitive understanding of the special needs of the Indian minority.

#### MALADIES OF INDIAN ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Statistics on Indian education are a major indictment against the results of Indian education. Drop out rates in Indian schools often are twice the national average and sometimes reach upwards to eighty or ninety percent. Achievement levels of Indian students are from two to three years below those of white students with the Indian student falling progressively behind as he stays in school. Only one percent of the Indian children in the elementary grades have Indian teachers or principals. It is frightening to note that one fourth of the elementary and secondary teachers of Indian children, by their own admission, would prefer not to teach Indian children. Teacher attitudes and values are just one of many reasons why Indian children think that they are "below average" in intelligence. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has a notorious history of failing to meet the real needs of Indians. A good part of this is due to its bureaucratic tendency of self-perpetuation and resistance to change. The average of top level Bureau education administrators is about fifty-eight years. A prime example of Bureau misdirection involves a crash program begun in 1953 and continued to 1967 in which an

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<sup>55</sup> Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, op. cit., p. XIII.

attempt was made to improve education for Navajo children. During these fourteen years of "improvement," supervisory positions in the Bureau headquarters increased one hundred and thirteen percent, supervisory positions in the Bureau schools increased one hundred and forty-four percent, administrative and clerical positions in Bureau schools increased ninety-four percent while teaching positions increased only twenty percent. This misapportionment of personnel can lead one to question the objectives of the Bureau as being of help to Indian youth. A large number of Indian youth feel that their high school training was inadequate and not as beneficial to them as it should have been in their attempts at higher education, vocational endeavors, or in solving their personal problems.

Bureau schools traditionally have given a minimum or no attention to Indian heritage or to contemporary issues of Indian life. The school curriculum often is geared toward the Anglo-American view of education. The Indian child is not taught to see pride in his heritage. History books speak of the victories of the white man as glorious and courageous, and the victories of the Indians as massacres. Most other texts in the curricula are unrelated to the student's experiences. Much of the course of study is of little practical use to Indian youth, especially to those who will return to life on the reservation. Because of the school's telling the Indian child that his culture was uncivilized and the media depicting his ancestors as savages, the Indian youth often develops a poor self-image. The problems are compounded when the Indian youth goes to a boarding school. Here he faces not only an alien culture but also a perplexing military rigidity. Studies by the National Institute of Mental Health indicate that anxiety, hostility, and aggression levels of Indian youth are significantly higher for those Indians in boarding schools than those in day schools. The Bureau is slowly, but steadily,

reducing the number of Federal boarding schools in it's system as a necessary task.

The teachers of Indian youth also have a crucial role in helping the Indians to feel like strangers in a foreign environment. Teachers of Indian children often know little or nothing about culture, the life-style, and the learning style of Indian children. The teacher must increasingly develop a responsibility which he has towards the development of the child's personality and character. Eventual Indian control of their own schools is needed to instill Indian self-respect. "It is essential that the school teach both the white and the Indian ways of living so that the child can have a positive sense of identity while learning to live successfully in the modern world."<sup>56</sup> Indian teachers and administrators will know better the special needs of Indian youth and will at the same time provide excellent role models who can explain and help the Indian youth adjust to life in two cultures.

The Indian's moral code and traditional practices espouse such values as resistance to coercion, belief in the immutability of human nature, a present time orientation, and an emphasis on familial ties, independence, and cooperation. These hamper the Indian youth's adjustment to the school which is molded around the white man's values. Besides the cultural disparities, the Indian's use of his native Indian language until he enters the school where English is the primary language is another factor in his adjustment to the school system. Dr. B. Gaarder of the United States Office of Education estimated that over one-half of Indian youth between the ages of six and eighteen use their native Indian tongues. Because of his unfamiliarity with

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<sup>56</sup>Estelle Fuchs, "Innovation at Rough Rock," The Saturday Review, L (September 16, 1967), p. 83.

the English language, the Indian student immediately falls behind his Anglo classmates. This inadequacy with the English language is looked upon as being a state of "retardation." In reality, the Indian student is academically handicapped because of his transition to the ideas of the white culture and his having to learn English as a second language.

Alonzo Spang in considering the maladies of Indian education states that "the concept of Indian education faces a bleak future characterized by stagnation, insensitivity, inadequate facilities and personnel."<sup>57</sup> Much of this is a result of inadequate funding for innovative ideas and programs in an attempt to restructure historically inferior educational systems. Spang notes that in educating Indian children much is being done in the direct destruction of the institution of the family among Indians. Indian parents, most of whom have less than five years of education, are unable to understand many of the concepts being taught in the white-run school. Indian children may ask parents about atoms, chemical compounds, and lunar voyages and find that their parents know little about the subjects. This may lead to a weakening of the parental role and make the parents feel somewhat threatened. This "information-gap" increases progressively as the child goes through school learning things which his parents have never heard of before.

Spang also points out the problems in Indian education of too few qualified Indians in Indian education, insensitive school personnel, the lack of involvement of Indian parents and leaders in the control of educational matters concerning their children, the irrelevant curricula, and white educational expectations for Indian youth. Spang goes on to emphasize the

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<sup>57</sup>Alonzo Spang, "Eight Problems in Indian Education," Journal of American Indian Education, Vol. 10 (October, 1970), p. 1.

problem Indian students have when pursuing a higher education. To alleviate this problem, Spang refers to the need for colleges and universities to establish programs which will help the Indian adjust to and remain in school. Generally, the Indian student has been handicapped by an inadequate educational background as he is often considered as less than college material when in high school. Finally, Spang believes that there are too many "instant Indian-education experts" around who believe that they have all the problems identified and all the solutions for the Indian. The Indian has no part in their planning and formulation of ideas and programs. According to Spang, these "experts" base their programs on shallow studies and have little knowledge of critical problems which are confronting the Indian people. Most of the maladies of Indian education have been recognized and programs initiated to alleviate the problems and yet the problems still exist. To this date, the missing element in the eventual solution of the Indians successfully structuring an acceptable educational program has been an unfortunate lack of faith and reliance upon the Indian people themselves by the white people "pulling the pursestrings" and directing Indian education.

#### PROPOSALS FOR RENOVATION

There is a definite need for a better working partnership between the Federal government and Indians in the restructuring of Indian educational priorities. Duly elected representatives of the Indian people must be given a voice in deciding the future of Indian education. There has been an increasing emergence of Indian feelings and increasing participation in the decision-making processes affecting Indian education. Much more Indian involvement is needed. The Indian school and the Indian community it serves have to develop responsibilities and lines of authority which are more inte-

grated and shared.

### Indian Control

At least a part of the problem of the low quality of Indian education is due to the fact that the Federal government is trying to do for the Indians what many Indians could do better for themselves. In regard to Indian involvement in the education of Indian youth, Kaltsounis states that there is no question that Indians should take over the schools in which their children constitute the majority. Kalsounis believes that even in those schools where Indian children are in the minority that Indians should try to penetrate the power structure and get involved in the making of policy. He points out that "when Indians obtain power over the schools, they should retain it at all costs until these schools acquire genuine Indianness—that is, are strong enough not to be threatened by the non-Indian elements of society."<sup>58</sup> Dr. John Chilcott states that it is more than Indian representation and control. In Boulay's article, "Indians Forever (Forgotten)," Dr. Chilcott states that the problem is "one of getting local control, and a type of local control that is sophisticated enough to run a district properly."<sup>59</sup> Chilcott, the director of the Office of Education's National Study of American Indian Education, feels that not only Indian representation is needed but also Indian leadership that knows something about progressive and meaningful education for Indian youth.

The Federal government now has responsibility for about 221,000 Indian children of school age. While over fifty thousand of these children attend

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<sup>58</sup>Theodore Kaltsounis, "The Need to Indianize Indian Schools," Vol. LIII, No. 5 (January, 1972), p. 292.

<sup>59</sup>Dr. John Chilcott, (in Peter Boulay's article), "Indians Forever (Forgotten)," op. cit., p. 16.

schools which are operated directly by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, only seven hundred and fifty Indian children are enrolled in schools where the responsibility for education has been contracted by the Bureau to Indian school boards. Fortunately, this is beginning to change. The Ramah Navajo Community of New Mexico and the Rough Rock and Black Water Schools in Arizona are notable exceptions which have recently been brought under local Indian control. This initial ventures have proved to be very successful. Other Indian communities are negotiating for similar arrangements in view of the prospects of successfully controlling the education of their children.

President Nixon made a statement on July 8, 1970 regarding the policies and goals for American Indians in their control of Indian education. As regards Indian control over the operation of Federally funded programs, "we believe every Indian community wishing to do so should be able to control its own Indian schools."<sup>60</sup> This control would be exercised by the local school boards selected by Indians and would function like school boards across the nation. To help assure this goal, President Nixon created by Executive Order the National Council on Indian Opportunity in March of 1969. The expressed purpose of this Council is to improve and coordinate the Federal programs in cooperation with Indian leaders in order to stimulate economic and social development on the reservation. Eight Indian leaders from the Southwest, Northwest, and urban areas were appointed by President Nixon and sworn in by the Secretary of Commerce, Maurice H. Stans, in Washington, D. C. Vice-President Spiro Agnew is the official chairman of the Council. Concrete programs with successful results will be the test of this initial innovative venture.

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<sup>60</sup> President Richard M. Nixon, statement on new policies and goals for Indian education, Indian Record, May, 1969, p. 1.



Kaltsounis states that the best way to Indianize the education of Indians is to hire qualified Indian teachers and administrators. These native Indian professional school personnel could create a warm and accepting environment in the school where the Indian child would feel relaxed and comfortable. They could persuade more Indian children to stay in school and through a good education help lead them to power in their affairs. Indian staff could stand up for the rights of the Indian parents and achieve a closer cooperation between the school and the community. Qualified Indian school personnel could act as Indian models. They would have a better understanding of Indian history and culture and be better able to incorporate it into the instruction where it could be learned by the Indian youth with respect and purpose.<sup>61</sup> In helping to develop these qualified Indian educational personnel, the Federal government and state governments with large Indian populations should work out arrangements with teacher education institutions to establish special programs for Indians. These programs would be rich in practical experiences with Indian children. They would be administered by a highly qualified Indian and should have a continuous input from the various Indian communities. Such a program, initially, would need more than the regular funding required for teacher education. This would be covered by Federal and state grants. Stipends would have to be offered to attract more Indian students to the program. Special funds would be available for counseling and tutoring and for the necessary traveling of Indian education students between participating Indian communities.

One of the better examples of teacher education institution preparing

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<sup>61</sup>Kaltsounis, op. cit., p. 294.

future Indian teachers is the Navajo Community College. This is a two year college and is attended by hundreds of Indians, mainly Navajo. Although it is just a two year institution, it could with adequate funding become an accredited teacher education institution which would train all those Indians who wanted to become teachers. If this plan were followed, Kaltsounsis believes that within five to ten years, the entire Navajo school system would be penetrated with Indian teachers. This would be a long-range approach which would reap it's maximum benefit in about a decade. The need for present teachers of Indian children to meet with Indian parents is very pressing. This must be done in order to create an atmosphere of mutual respect in which to discuss openly any problems of common concern. Concerned colleges and universities could help by setting up the meetings between Indian parents and the teachers of Indian children by organizing classes open to both the teachers and parents. Such meetings would also be an indication on the part of all concerned of a willingness to improve the quality and scope of education for Indian youth.

In looking at the proposals to give Indian leadership a prominent role in the education of Indian children, it is of interest to consider the relationship of Indians to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Over the years there has been a considerable amount of ill-feeling towards the Bureau and recently there has been a mounting protest from Indian groups from across the country condemning the inefficiency and inadequacy of the Bureau. There is a definite emphasis on reforming the inflexible and stratified policies of the Bureau. Secretary of the Interior, Rogers C. B. Morton, in response to this feeling, recently announced some important concessions concerning the necessity to increase the Indian's role in the Bureau. Today, there is a renewed emphasis upon contracting with Indian tribes and groups to take over Bureau services

and positions. Morton pointed out that from now on the Federal government would review with the National Tribal Charman's Association and the National Congress of American Indians exactly how Bureau funds are to be spent.

In future project applications, the Bureau must have an analysis of the Indian children's needs along with objective educational measurements of the worth of the project. The Bureau must also provide a description of in-service training of paraprofessional aides and professional staff members. There must be a specific provision for an Indian representative to act as a go-between among the non-English speaking local Indian community, local school boards, and the school's professional staff. A provision was also included which states that before initiating a Bureau program that a type of parent-Teacher's Association meeting be conducted in order to evaluate the goals and effectiveness of the proposed program. The involvement of Indian representatives in the consideration of projects and expenditures for Indian education is a crucial step towards increasing Indian responsibility in designing education and school settings for their children.

#### Other Needs

There is a definite need to refine the idea of local schools for Indian students. This will eliminate the need for boarding schools and allow the students to live among the Indian community. One of the worst features of the boarding school concept was the fact that the Indian youth were coerced into living in an alien setting away from their Indian culture. This, in fact, was one of the points argued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in favor of establishing boarding schools where Indian youth could be removed from the influence of their parents and Indian culture. The failure of the boarding school concept is just another reaffirmation for increasing influence and content of Indian cultural heritage in the curriculum content. Another possible

alternative is in building a network of paved roads across the reservation to a convenient public school. Bus routes would be established to day schools for Indian children across the reservation or in remote regions. In this way the Indian child could live at home and attend school concurrently. In this way the Indian child could be exposed to much more positive warmth and parental direction in his daily life. Indian adults could be provided employment and pride in building needed improvements on the reservation through the construction of the new road system.

Salary incentives should be provided in order to attract and retain the best teachers and educational specialists for Indian children. Presently, with the exception of a few outstanding individuals, the low salaries in Bureau schools assures the educational systems of the poorest and least qualified teachers and specialists. In working towards the improvement of the Indian youth's state of mental health, a professional corps of psychological counselors, trained social workers, and other mental health specialists need to be attracted by higher salaries and the challenges of a progressive educational system. Increased Federal and state funding which is approved by Indian representatives could lead to the development of imaginative and innovative programs, the recruiting of Indians and highly qualified school specialists for progressive change, the construction of needed physical facilities, and the involvement of the government and the Indian community in working together towards a concept of Indian education based on warmth, insight, and renovation. One of the key variables involved here is the willingness of the government and the taxpayer to reassert their priorities in spending from defense and space exploration to the gradual alleviation of the dire needs and concerns of the neglected Indian through a revamping of the educational system for Indian youth.

## Chapter 5

### A DIRECTION OF AUTONOMY

In the course of this country's effort to "civilize" the Indian through education, the philosophy has generally been one of teaching him how to think and act like a white man. This policy has proven not only unproductive but disastrous. The Indian has developed feelings of depression and inferiority due to this cultural suppression. He is a minority which is the least educated of our population. Indians must take the initiative to develop pride in their cultural heritage through a progressive program of education which meets the real needs of Indians. White support should be provided where asked for but the Indians must rely upon their independence from the white community and the dedication of their leaders if they are to succeed with the long-overdue program of a good education for Indians.

### TOWARDS A PHILOSOPHY

In the process of working towards a redevelopment of the emphasis in Indian education upon white cultural values, it is fundamental that a working and valid philosophy of education be established and practiced through educational systems. A consideration of the failure of Indian education to the present time can be clearly seen in the educational philosophy which is being practiced.

From the first contact with the Indian, the school and the classroom have been a primary tool of assimilation. Education was the means whereby we emancipated the Indian child from his home, his parents, his extended family, and his cultural heritage. It was in effect an attempt to wash the 'savage

habits' and 'tribal ethic' out of a child's mind and substitute a white middle-class value system in its place.<sup>62</sup>

This imposition of the white middle-class value system upon Indian children has left them confused and has bolstered their feelings of inferiority. Former President Lyndon B. Johnson advocated some very high goals for Indian education. His attractive goals point out the discrepancy between a philosophy and a concerted program of action. While the proposed philosophy may not only sound fantastic, it may be unobtainable. Still, the goals must be there and the first step taken in an attempt to implant the ideals into workable programs. Johnson stated that education should provide:

a standard of living for the Indians equal to that of the country as a whole. Freedom of choice: an opportunity to remain in their homelands, if they choose, without surrendering their dignity; an opportunity to move to the towns and cities of America, if they choose, equipped with the skills to live in equality and dignity. Full participation in the life of modern America, with a full share of economic opportunity and social justice.<sup>63</sup>

This philosophy is in keeping with the counselor's attempt to provide several alternative selections to any situation. The Indian would have the freedom to choose between a life on the reservation or one in the dominant culture and be able to live in either with dignity and satisfaction.

The Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education in its 1969 report found that the Bureau of Indian Affairs was operating under just about the opposite philosophy in the structure of its educational programs for Indian youth. According to the report, Bureau administrators and teachers believe that Indians have either the choice of total "Indianness" or a complete

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<sup>62</sup>Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>63</sup>President Lyndon B. Johnson, Statistics Concerning Indian Education, U. S. Department of the Interior, (Lawrence, Kansas: Publications Service, Haskell Institute, 1969), p. 2.

assimilation into the dominant culture. The Subcommittee pointed out that the Bureau seems to have little understanding of acculturation processes or the desirability of combining a firm cultural identity with occupational success and consequent self-esteem. The goal of the Bureau of Indian Affairs appears to be to "direct students toward migration to a city while at the same time it fails to prepare students academically, socially, psychologically, or vocationally for urban life."<sup>64</sup> Here again, one can see the actual results of governmental influence in Indian educational affairs. The actual programs and results of Indian programs leads one to question the sincerity of the government in an attempt to fulfill it's objectives. The philosophy of Indian education should be one developed by the Indians themselves. The Indian must decide whether it would be in his best interests to provide an education which prepares Indian youth for life on the reservation, a life in the dominant culture, or both. The best philosophy seems to be one of providing Indian students the most flexibility from which to make decisions. This would be one which recognizes Indian cultural values and shows the Indian how he may keep his traditional values and operate successfully in the dominant culture if he chooses to do so. An emphasis should be placed on flexibility and a clear understanding and appreciation of cultural differences where they do exist.

#### A VIABLE FUTURE

In the future of Indian education there must be qualified Indian teachers and administrators directing the educational program. These Indian educational leaders would have a direct impact upon working out the prejudices

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<sup>64</sup>Indian Education: A National Tragedy—A National Challenge, op. cit., p. 62.



and problems which have their roots in a white-administered educational system. "The spearhead must be directed toward the problems as Indians themselves see them rather than as the non-Indian perceives them. Hopefully, the era of non-Indians telling Indians what their problems are and how to solve them will soon be past."<sup>65</sup> Indian understanding of Indian problems and needs will help the Indian school personnel establish a sensitive and responsive program to better prepare Indian youth for a realistic and worthwhile future. The new era in Indian education is marked by recent civil rights movements and a resurgence of Indian pride. Indians are increasingly rejecting the notion that America is a "melting pot" because this has been recognized as an effort on the part of the majority to suppress and dominate all others. Indian militants like to think of America as a "salad bowl" in which a great diversity of ingredients are able to maintain their identity while at the same time being able to blend into a desirable and powerful unit.

The Federal government's attitude towards Indian education is in a process of change. More frequently, one can see government schools developing bicultural and bilingual programs in order to help the Indian meet his desire to preserve his culture. The Indians are generally suspicious of this new government effort because of a long and bitter trail of government deceit and misunderstanding. This tendency of the Indian to resist the efforts of the government is the Indian's way of saying that he will fight the policy of assimilation. Despite the apathy, hostility, and suspicion of the white man, Indians today are beginning to place a high value on formal education as a

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<sup>65</sup>Theodore George and Robert Price, quoted in an article, "The Need to Indianize Indian Schools," Kaltsounis, op. cit., p. 291.

necessary step to achieve their wishes. Indications are that there will be a great increase in Indian participation in the development of educational programs for Indian children. Indian tribal leaders on most reservations are beginning to take an active interest in educational matters. These leaders wish to state their opinions on educational policies, construction of school plants, and the special needs of Indian youth. Some Indians are getting positions now as members of local school boards where they will have a more powerful voice in important educational decisions. Tribes are contributing to the education of Indian youth through youth conferences, college scholarships, youth work programs, summer camps, recreational programs, and even by contributing money for students who need eyeglasses. Education will open up some good opportunities for countless Indians in the professions, arts, and trades.

Generally, the educated Indian must leave the reservation if he wants to find the best job for his skills. This has been one of the arguments against education by Indian parents who saw their children leaving the reservation and their families. Indian parents now realize that if their child stays on the reservation he will probably be "underemployed" and destined to a life of frequent unemployment. Those remaining on the reservation are usually very poor, have the least education, the least skills, and are least knowledgeable about today's problems. A likely solution to this dilemma is the encouragement of Indian business and industry to locate on or near the reservation and provide substantial employment for local Indians who would prefer to live on the reservation. The educational achievement of each generation of Indians has exceeded that of the previous generation. The median educational level of adults under the age of forty-five is about the eighth grade. This provides quite a contrast to the median educational level of the fifth grade for the

total adult population. The present generation of Indians will raise the educational level considerably higher as there are now more Indian students in colleges and trade schools than ever before. The future looks like it might hold even more opportunities for Indians desiring more education.

With Indian leadership being provided by qualified Indian school personnel, the education of Indian youth will be more enticing and challenging in the future. Indian youth will be seeking a better education and spending more years in school. There will be a far greater sense of enjoyment and fulfillment in learning which the Indian child had not known before the time of widespread Indian involvement. He will feel a sense of joy in regaining his self-respect and self-confidence in himself in the school. Indian teachers will include discussions of Indian cultural heritage and legends along with the regular coursework. The Indian youth will be filled with a sense of pride that he is an Indian. His self-respect returning, he will have feelings of losing his fear of being inferior and incapable. Indian school personnel will have high expectations for the Indian child and the Indian child in turn will have the confidence necessary to expect to do well. Courses taught in the native Indian language, a source of Indian pride, will reassure the Indian student of the beauty and expression to be found in the language of his ancestors. The education of American Indian youth which, historically, has been an attempt of a majority to assimilate a minority will need to establish a sound philosophy on the basis of ideas presented by qualified Indian representatives. This philosophy will maintain a sense of pride in the Indian cultural heritage while developing in the Indian the capabilities necessary for him to hold his Indian values and incorporate them into his life in a dominant white culture.

## Chapter 6

### SUMMARY

The education of Indian youth has been replete with problems. These problems stem from the fact that the needs of the Indian were not considered when the first educational system for Indians was established. In the early days of our country, the Indians were taken from their villages and instructed by white men in subjects which the white man felt were important to him. The older Indian tribal leaders were perplexed by the product of a white education. The young Indians returned to the tribe after a few years in the white man's educational system. The returning youth had learned subject matter which was of absolutely no value to the Indians in their lives in the forest and on the plains. The Indian leaders, feeling that their young had wasted their time in the white man's schools, offered in return to accept some of the young white children and teach them how to live off the land courageously, wisely, and independently. The white man never accepted the Indian offer because he considered the Indian way of life to be savage and uncivilized. The white man's education and beliefs were imposed upon the Indian in the early days of our country. The white colonists felt that with their superior technical know-how and material wealth that they naturally knew much more than the Indian.

The white man has had a deep belief that his values were better than Indian values and that the Indian could benefit from the white man's values. For the last four centuries, it has been assumed that a coercion of white values through education of the Indian was the best policy because it proclaimed the natural superiority and magnanimity of the materially wealthy white

man. According to this attitude, the Indian with his "primitive nature" was in great need of learning how to be a white man and living another way of life with more "realistic values." Thus, one can see an immense period of time in which cultural genocide was practiced and silently rejected by the Indian people. The policy has ineffectively attempted to teach the Indian how to adjust and live in harmony with the white man's values and in the social traditions of a white society.

The education of American Indian youth has been a "national disgrace." Bicultural Indian students have a great amount of difficulty with an academic curriculum which is taught in English and which is often irrelevant to Indian needs. Their self-image suffers in the school due to the use of biased materials which point out that an Indian is a "savage who massacred gallant white frontiersmen and settlers who carved a great nation out of a wilderness." Teachers and administrators, most of whom are white, feel that Indians are less intelligent than whites and they don't expect too much from them. Indian youth see these feelings in both subtle and overt behaviors of the school staff. When the Indian student internalizes these expectations and feelings of inferiority, they act to guarantee his impending failure. This is one of the causes for the common sense of depression and apathy which is so evident on so many reservations and in so many schools. Indian leaders, Indian teachers, Indian counselors, and Indian administrators are needed in Indian schools if this educational wasteland is to be saved. Indians must take control and responsibility for Indian education. The value of human resources lost in Indian schools is too great. The time for a reassertion of Indian pride and educational innovation under Indian experts is now.

Today, like during the period of the Meriam Report and the New Deal,

the white man is awakening with the Indian and becoming concerned about the disastrous effects of an imposed education upon a cultural minority. Only time will tell if this is just an infatuation with the Christian concept of "caring for the welfare of your fellow man." This movement, like that of the early 1930's and 1940's may die out also with the coming of other pressing concerns of national significance. Still, awareness and acceptance of human differences is at least being voiced in the mass media and seems to be headed towards the realm of acceptability. Accepting the differences of others is a difficult concept for many people to learn but it is a worthy objective. The Indian, himself, is tired of being manipulated. He is growing more restive and vociferous in his demands to keep his culture and his stubborn pride. With sensitive Indian and white leaders working together, much can be done in reversing the damage done through the bondage of an imposed cultural system upon a minority. A healthy respect and appreciation for human differences and individuality is necessary for human freedom and justice. It is absolutely imperative if people are to remain diverse, and grow, and live in peace.

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A COUNSELOR'S VIEW OF THE EDUCATION  
OF AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH

by

PAUL MICHAEL WISHALL

B. A., Kansas State University, 1968

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1972

## ABSTRACT

The American Indian has been the recipient of a great amount of white misunderstanding and prejudice in the United States since the arrival of the first white men. This feeling is one of Indian inferiority and primitiveness which has been reflected in our educational policy towards Indians. This policy of education for Indian youth has constantly vascillated with the winds of time. Since the establishment of the first formal educational plant in 1568, the white man has dedicated himself to a destructive attempt to "Christianize and civilize" the "heathen savages." The policy has long been one of making the red man into a white man with little or no recognition of the Indian's beliefs, desires, and way of life. As is evidenced today, Indians have not been greatly helped by the white man's "generosity" of the last four centuries. The Indian has found that the white man's courses are irrelevant to his way of living (of being in harmony with nature), that they are taught in a foreign language (English), and that they are sometimes a subtle, sometimes open, but nearly always vicious program of calculated destruction of the Indian heritage. The mere fact that today's once-proud Indians are the poorest of our poor minorities is a clear indication that the educational system hasn't helped the Indian towards an adjusted and successful way of life and that our "first American citizen" has now become our "last American citizen."

Counseling with Indian students is a very challenging task. It involves a recognition of cultural disparities, an increasing Indian pride in their ancestral heritage, and sincere respect for the individuality of each Indian student. The counselor must help the Indian student in his decision-making in order that he may be able to select the most desirable alternatives

which will enable him to develop to the height of his innate potential. The white counselor faces many additional problems in his working effectively with Indian youth. First and foremost is the mere fact that he is white. This alone will make it difficult for Indian students to trust him and will jeopardize understanding and cooperation in the counseling relationship. Because of the white man's cultural differences and his race, many Indian students will find it difficult to confide in him. These students will question the white counselor's sincerity, his ability to understand their problems, and his judgment. The white counselor must be aware of this if he plans to help Indian students. The counselor must be extremely sensitive to the special needs of the Indian youth with whom he works.

The counselor of Indian youth has a role somewhat like that of a catalyst of change. Stultifying and prejudicial attitudes of teachers and administrators of Indian students must be questioned and challenged. To a large extent, the Indian student's self-image is formed by the perceptions and expectations of these school personnel and by "significant others" in his life. Too often, these observations and expectations are extremely low and the Indian student is treated as being inferior or unintelligent. He begins to live the role which is expected of him and in the course of this self-fulfilling prophecy insures the early termination of his education and his feelings of depression and failure. There is a drastic need for immediate change of this situation. Many times, however, hasty decisions and planning concerning the education of Indian students has resulted in chaotic disaster. The counselor must work closely with the school to adequately prepare Indian students educationally and psychologically for the barriers and problems they will face when they decide to enter the institutions of the dominant white culture or return to the reservation to lead a productive life. Careful and

sensitive programs incorporating qualified Indian school personnel and permitting more Indian control in Indian education is essential now. With this restructuring of personnel and priorities will come the development of the Indian student's pride, self-respect, and personal direction in his life.